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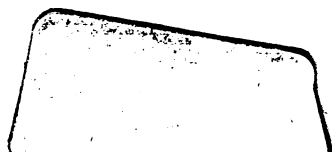
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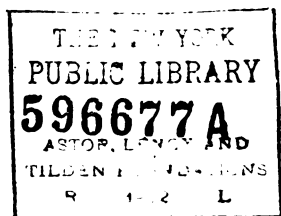
THE
CURSE OF INTELLECT

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PART I.

WRITTEN BY MACHIAVELLI COLIN CLOUT

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CHAPTER I.

I FIRST knew Reuben Power at Cambridge in 1860. We entered the same year at Jesus, and sat by chance together at Hall. He came afterwards to my rooms, and what I suppose is called a strong friendship sprang up between us.

He read hard, but fitfully, and solely, I believe, for pleasure. Though he had been at no public school, he soon knew every one. There was a peculiar attraction about him; so that, with his wide circle of acquaintance, not by chance but choice were determined those who came to his rooms. The attraction was not of liking, for there was an inhuman coldness about the man; perhaps it was from innate power, for though I never knew him put forward his own wishes, I

had always a sense, when with him, that things fell out as he wished. Perhaps the attraction was in manner. He showed the same equal politeness to all, and, without any apparent intention, induced those with him to talk on the subjects they best liked or were best acquainted with.

It will be found that, though I was Power's most intimate friend, I never knew till after his death what manner of man he really was. And even now his life is to me in great part a mystery. Nothing I write turns on mesmerism, but I may relate an occurrence, somewhat strange, which took place in his rooms. It may throw a scintilla of light on what is here written.

In 1860 mesmerism was but a thing laughed at, decried by all men who boasted of reason.

Power was not only, as I have said, cold, but apparently dead in intellect to all prejudice: he could be rude when any one showed it. There was a dirty, wizened little man in our year, Richard Quelch, who bored us all perpetually by talking of blood

and good birth, supreme belief in his own family showing through all his words. One evening, when he had troubled us even more than was usual, Power's voice was heard in a pause to murmur softly—

“That your fathers were very great men
Is what all of us know to be true.
You talk of your family,—when
Will your family talk about you?”

The verse, I should notice, was not original, but came from an Oxford man, Richard Crawley, of the same year.

Quelch was furious, and replied angrily and rudely. He even rose up, as it seemed, to attack Power; but before we could intervene, sat down again, passing his hand in a troubled way over his forehead. Power neither moved nor spoke, he simply kept his eyes steadily fixed on the other's face. We sat in silence some time—how long I could not say—when Quelch, staring at Power again, tried to rise, but failed; he seemed tied down by Power's eyes. A third time he tried to rise, but with a muttered “Damn you” fell back insensible.

Under Power's directions we carried Quelch—still insensible—to his rooms above, and left him on his bed in a sound sleep. I alone returned to Power's rooms and asked him what he had done.

"Nothing," said he; "the man lost his temper, and so was an easy subject for mesmerism. He will sleep it off, and remember nothing to-morrow."

In fact, Quelch had quite forgotten the incident on the next day; but knowing then little of mesmerism, an uncomfortable feeling akin to fear remained in us towards Power.

It was a few days later that my tutor Foxglove asked me to his rooms after Hall. He was alone, and said he wished to speak to me privately. He warned me earnestly against my friendship with Power. He said he had studied the man, and found him without heart, without belief of any kind, wrapped, absorbed in a theory of the utter degradation, the lost state of man; without hope himself, and divorced absolutely from all happiness. "But," con-

tinued he, "he has great force of character, and there is some fatal attraction of others in him. How or why, I know not—perhaps because he is free from ordinary human weakness. Shun him. He would sacrifice you, even his nearest and dearest, for his own ends; and be sure any ends he may have in view cannot be for the benefit of mankind."

Foxglove's words naturally drew me nearer to Power, and from that time our friendship—if the term be correct—strengthened. Perhaps it would have been better if it had not.

That "long" Power went down with me to my home. My father was rector of Deane, in Herefordshire. He was nearly eighty-five, and a curate carried on all his duties, while my sister nursed him. Mary was my only sister—a bright, pretty, cheerful girl. And I loved her dearly, though even a suggestion of strong feeling from myself sounds strangely as I write it. The rectory was a little compact cottage—two labourers' cottages built into one. In front

was a big smooth lawn, with masses of picturesque trees and shrubs to the left and right, shielding the house from east winds and westerly gales. Beyond the lawn there sloped away gradually, for three or four miles, great fields of wheat and barley, broken here and there by clumps of trees, till below us appeared the town of Starr and its square church-tower. Above Starr, but forty miles away, rose rounded hills—the Skirrid, the Sugarloaf, and Blorenge—backed in the farther distance by the dimmer lines of the Black Mountains. On the other side of the house, far away—twenty miles off—with green pasture and changing arable fields between, were the sharper outlined Malvern Hills. It was a peaceful spot—my father happy in Mary's constant care, she happy in unselfish life.

Power's coming was quite an event in the quiet household, and at dinner, for the first time since I had known him, I heard him lead the conversation, touching lightly and brightly, not without humour, innumer-

able subjects. Mary's earnest eyes and my father's laughter proved his success.

As we sat alone over our pipes I told him of this. He made no reply, but after a time said—

“May I speak here as I always do?”

When I had assented, he went on—

“Do you think your father and sister are happy?”

“I am sure they are,” said I; “there are not two happier people in England.”

“And yet what happiness!” said he—
“the happiness of creatures of instinct, not of intellect. Your father—forgive me—accepts the tenets of his antiquated religion because he knows no other; his religion is a religion of instinct, not reason. Your sister is a mere nurse, happy in giving pleasure to one feeble old man. Think of her wasted energies, of what she might do were her intellect developed. Any nurse, vulgar, foolish, ill-bred, could fulfil all her present duties. It is happiness of instinct, not reason.”

“And the lower because of that?”

Power frowned. "I don't know," said he. "I am wrong," he added, quickly; "I *do* know. It must be lower. All that separates man from other beasts is reason. By intellect he is higher than all other created beings. It must be right that intellect should be developed even at the expense of happiness."

A few days after, my father and I sat alone. Power and Mary had gone out wandering together, as they now often did.

"Mary's is a sad, a lonely life," said my father, suddenly.

"She is happy," said I.

"Yes, yes," he replied, somewhat testily; "she is a good girl, a dutiful girl. But I am much to blame."

"Colin," he went on again after a time, in a rather shaky voice, "I have engaged a nurse."

"A nurse?"

"Yes. I must sacrifice Mary no longer. The woman comes to-day. What time is it?"

I told him half-past twelve.

"Half-past twelve! Poor girl! She is out walking with your friend, is she not?"

I told him she was.

His voice trembled a little when he next spoke, and sounded tearful.

"The first time for five years she has missed giving me my gruel at half-past twelve, Colin. Five years! Yes, I am much to blame. Think of a pretty girl like Mary wearing away her life in giving gruel to an old, helpless man."

Mary and Power did not come in till past four, and in the hall Mary met a tall, hard-featured woman.

"Who are you?" asked Mary, suspiciously.

"The new nurse, miss," was the reply.

"The new nurse?"

"Yes, miss; ordered down here immediate by your father. Here's the letter."

Mary did not wait to read, but hurried out to me in the garden.

"What is this, Colin? This new nurse—why has she come?"

I told her. She burst into tears and ran

away to her room. The rest of the day she scarcely spoke to Power, but hung round her father and would not let the nurse approach. The following day was the same, but the next day she was out again with Power, and at half-past twelve it was the nurse who gave the gruel.

Poor girl! she had seen few men, and I fear quickly gave up her heart to Power.

Under the change my father suddenly aged. He grew deaf, and slower and stiffer in gait. And in the last week before the end of the "long," he died.

A few days before the death I had gone to London, and on my return found Mary seated alone in the garden. I asked her where Power was.

"He is gone," said she.

An open volume of Coleridge lay on her lap. I took it from her, and found the following lines marked:—

"A grief without a pang, void, dark and drear,
A stifled, drowsy, unimpassioned grief,
Which finds no natural outlet, no relief,
In word or sigh or tear.

O lady! in this wan and heartless mood,
To other thoughts by yonder throstle woo'd
All this long eve, so balmy and serene,
Have I been gazing on the western sky,
And its peculiar tint of yellow green :
And still I gaze—and with how blank an eye !
And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars ;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen :
Yon crescent moon as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue ;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are !”

I asked who had marked the passage.

“He did,” said she, “before he went.”

I sat down by her and took her hand.

“Poor Mary!” said I.

Then her tears broke forth, and in her
innocence and sorrow she let me know all.

Before he went Power had told her he
loved her. But he did not ask her love in
return. He must have spoken, however,
assuming that she loved him. For he said,
as nearly as I could gather, that he knew he
could never make her happy, that he himself
could never know happiness, that he had no

hope, no belief, no future. He felt apart from other men, scarcely knew as he spoke why he rejected her. His last words she remembered exactly as they were spoken.

"What I am doing," said he, "is, I know, best for you. Why I should do what is best for you, I know not. I am impelled thereto. Forget me; go back to your old life of instinctive happiness. I fear I have wronged you."

"I shall never forget him," said Mary, quietly. And she never did.

It was perhaps strange, but I felt no ill-will to Power. I even thought what he had done was for the best. He could have made no woman happy. So, when I went back, there was no breach in our friendship. His face showed that he had suffered, but I think the suffering was from clearer consciousness of the solitariness of his own nature rather than from lost love.

"Did you see those verses?" he asked abruptly one evening when we were alone. I guessed to what he referred, and said I had.

"How mad the world is! How mad Coleridge himself when he wrote that!" said Power. "His spirit of imagination was in no way suspended; his dejection did not arise from that. His misery was from fulness of knowledge. His imagination failed to create, not because it was dead, but because the man himself had learnt the uselessness of exercising it, and so could not exercise it. While he had hope for man, belief in God, there was spur to creation. He might do good: he at least, as a servant of a higher Being, was fulfilling his duty. But he had learnt the truth,—the meanness of man, the objectlessness of his life, the impossibility that any the feeblest God could care for the lives of such mean beasts. And with this knowledge came loss of will to use imagination."

"An unpleasant theory," said I.

"For him or for us? And yet——" he broke off suddenly, and was silent. Then again he went on: "What is truth? What is man, in fact? We want a new standpoint of criticism. Man cannot criticise

himself; it is impossible. All critics fail even in the simple matter of too much praise or abuse. I should like to know from some independent source what I really am, what my fellows really are."

I think it must have been about the time of this conversation that Power first began to brood over the experiment he afterwards so strangely carried out. He became more solitary than ever, and did not take the same pains as before to draw knowledge from diverse men. He began to apply himself closely to Natural History, a subject he had before little inclined to, though of that as, I fancy, of most things, he already knew something. But he never altogether neglected mathematics, and was looked to by the College as a certain Wrangler.

If I remember rightly, the examination in 1864 for the mathematical tripos extended over eight days,—a preliminary examination of three days, and then, after an interval, five days in higher subjects.

On the first day of the higher subjects, Power breakfasted with me. When I told

him it was time to start, he replied quietly he did not mean to go in. I pressed him, knowing his strength lay in pure mathematics and the higher problems. No. He was firm. He had got a degree on the three days, and said he cared nothing what label of comparative excellence the examiner put on him. He got a senior optime on the three days alone.

When he went down, his last words to me were, "I go out into the world for a new standpoint of criticism."

I lost sight of him absolutely for twenty-six years. I neither heard of nor from him. I do not know that I was greatly troubled by his loss, though he was the only man with whom I had ever made an approach to friendship. But his disappearance, I felt, was strange. That he had power to attain at least a known place amongst men I was assured, and accounted for his not being known by absence of ambition, or possibly indifference to the opinion of men. Perhaps the reason why only second-class men attain the highest, most

coveted worldly positions is, that the greatest are commonly unmoved by ambition or love of applause.

My sister, I should perhaps here state, never married. She passed a quiet life in doing what the world calls good to the poor and unfortunate. Our maternal grandfather died about 1880, and left us both considerable property. When I was exceptionally hipped, I went to my sister's rooms and sat with her, smoking. I found there a restful happy atmosphere which soothed me.

After our parting in 1864 at Cambridge, I first again met Power at the Opera in 1890.

CHAPTER II.

SOME time in 1889, I think in the spring, I read in a London paper what I then thought a lying paragraph, stating that a man was living in Italy — where, I forget — with a monkey which he had taught to converse with him and live as an ordinary human being. Now and again, during that year and the early months of 1890, other paragraphs referring to this man and monkey appeared, and I think there was once a reference to some attack by the beast on a little child, and an attempt by a mob to worry the animal. No one in England believed what was reported, and when in Italy in the autumn of 1889, I neither saw nor heard anything of the two. Power I had lost complete sight of since he left Cam-

bridge, and it never struck me that he might be the man in question. How he intended to make his new standpoint for an independent criticism of humanity, I did not then know.

I was in the stalls at Covent Garden on a Saturday in May 1890. The opera was "Don Giovanni." The Italian opera in England always strikes me as a close representation of English society. First comes the leading soprano or tenor, enormously paid, often a brilliant charlatan, seldom a true artist, a natural aristocrat, a Titjiens, Mario, or Faure. Then, after a wide interval, come the smugly respectable, fairly paid middle class, the second sopranos, altos, tenors, and basses, conventional in voice, movement, and expression. And, last of all, the poorly paid populace, the chorus and orchestra. Only now and again is true genius seen, and then but in a swamp of conventionalism.

My neighbours to the right were two gentlemanlike young fellows,—gentlemanly in their quiet dress and apparent want of

individuality. The two places to the left were at first empty.

The opera had advanced to that point in the libretto when Don Giovanni—behind the scenes—makes an improper attempt on Zerlina. A cry was heard outside to emphasise the virtuous peasant's modest resistance, and quickly Zerlina herself came tripping on, holding her outraged feelings under such ladylike restraint that, when at the footlights, she repressed her birdlike twitterings of woe to bow smilingly three times to the appreciative public. The *prima donna*, after this artistic interlude, was about to abandon herself again to polished grief, when her eyes turned to the seats on my left, which I had believed empty. As she did so, she made a pretty *moue* of discontent.

Looking round, I saw the two places were filled,—the nearer by a worn, grey man of perhaps fifty, whose face struck me as one I ought to remember, though I did not. The expression was of perfect, perhaps unfeeling, repose. Who occupied the seat beyond I

could not then see, but the two men to my right leant forward to look, and one said to the other, "Great shame; oughtn't to be allowed," and his friend echoed the words, "oughtn't to be allowed."

Now I had already noticed that the occupant of the farther seat had boots on like the two speakers, and that all of his dress which I could see was of good cloth and good build. The dictates of fashion being thus satisfied, the feeling excited in my right-hand neighbours was so strange that I leant forward to see what could possibly have aroused it. One glance was enough. The clothes and boots were covering the body of a monkey. The hair of the head and on the face was admirably cut and arranged, but the face was undoubtedly the face of a monkey.

And as I saw this, it came across me in a flash of memory that the man by me was Reuben Power.

But I did not speak to him. One of the few things I allow myself to be peculiar in is in not talking at the Opera.

And as Power did not notice me, no word passed.

The performance from this time dragged on wretchedly. The incoming of the monkey had evidently taken all heart out of the performers. And the attention of the audience was divided. Most of those in the stalls and private boxes—with that supreme forgetfulness of the feelings of others which marks the English lady or gentleman—levelled their glasses at Power's companion: even the singers, abandoned, cast side glances in the same direction, and from the gallery came a few hisses—directed, doubtless, against the non-human listener.

No applause greeted the fall of the curtain, but it was no sooner fairly down than a storm of hissing broke forth from all sides of the house. I stood up and turned, the better to view the scene. Power and his companion did the same. After a minute,—the storm of hissing still continuing,—I spoke to Power, and he remembered me. He showed no pleasure or interest in the meeting.

"Have you found your new standpoint?" I asked.

"I think so," said he, with a strange, almost menacing, look in his face; "I have been twenty-six years trying."

The storm of noise grew greater.

"I assume you know it is you and your companion who are being hissed?" said I.

"Of course," replied he, imperturbably. "Do you think there is any chance of their resorting to violence?"

"Possibly; one can never foretell what human beings will do."

"It would be unpleasant. The noise alone is offensive."

"And your—your friend can understand you when you speak? I noticed you spoke before the outburst of feeling."

"He can understand me, and I him," was the reply, with a gleam of triumph.

As Power spoke he handed his glasses to the monkey, who quietly raised them to his eyes and surveyed the gallery, whence a very babel of discordant hissing came down on us. This raised the anger of the house

to fever-point, and the noise, if possible, increased.

"You are unfortunate," said I; "it was sheer chance whether they would take your comrade's presence as a joke or an insult. The *prima donna* turned the scale."

"I saw that," said Power; "still, I can't understand their taking offence in so near an outward likeness to themselves."

As he spoke a well-dressed man, whom I recognised as the stage-manager, came along the row of stalls in which we were, till he reached Power. He came without difficulty, as all near the monkey had left their seats in indignation. He pointed out to Power what a disturbance the presence of his comrade made, and appealed to him to leave the house. As he spoke, an orange, thrown from what part of the house I did not see, struck the monkey on the shirt-front, spotting it with yellow, and fell broken to the ground. A loud cheer and coarse laughter rose in place of the hissing, and then there was silence, as if all present were striving, even

from impossible distances, to hear what was said where we were.

As the orange struck his shirt, the monkey turned to Power, and, showing distinct but suppressed anger, addressed him. I say deliberately "addressed" him, for I knew afterwards the sounds made conveyed intelligible meaning to Power. To us standing near, they constituted but a painfully grotesque parody of man's speech.

"Before I answer your request, you must pick up that orange," said Power to the stage-manager, "and wipe the shirt of what you men term the monkey."

"Nonsense, sir! you play with me," was the reply.

Before Power could speak, the monkey had gripped the man's arm, till I saw him flush with pain. The grip given, the animal remained quiet, save for a few more angry expressions to Power. And all the time the house in silence watched what went on.

"I assure you," said Power, always speaking in a colourless, emotionless voice, "if you don't comply with my request, you are a

dead man. Come, be reasonable, though a man. Treat my friend as a fellow-being. You cannot blame him for coming. The blame, if there be any, must be mine. We have been insulted,—and by one of a class, I may tell you, he hates and despises. I ask little. Take up the orange, wipe the shirt. Remember I am helpless. It is life or death.”

As Power spoke, it was clear the stage-manager had become utterly unmanned. Whether it was the inhuman strength suggested by the grip, the sudden surprise in seeing a man converse intelligibly with a monkey, or physical shock, I know not. He trembled and hesitated. Then with his handkerchief he wiped the monkey’s shirt, and awkwardly picked up the orange. The monkey bowed.

“Thank you,” said Power; “you shall have no further trouble. It is useless, I see, our remaining.”

The stage-manager said something about returning the money paid.

“I think not,” replied Power; “the audi-

ence have quite made up to us in amusement whatever we may have lost on the stage."

As they moved to go, the stage-manager was hurrying away first. Power stopped him, and gave the monkey precedence. But when the poor fellow fell back not only behind the monkey but Power himself, Power waved him in front,—“All men are equal,” said he.

Every one in the house had watched breathlessly what took place, but evidently without the least understanding. Still, they recognised the demonstrated fact of the monkey's withdrawal, and, as he and Power left, a deafening cheer followed them.

“We English are irresistible when we're roused,” said one of the men on my right, as he gently clapped his hands.

“Irresistible; we only want rousing,” said the other, who evidently was of better breeding than his friend, for his hands remained still, even under the exceptional excitement.

CHAPTER III.

I AM indifferent to what houses I go or do not go,—and generally do not go. But I could not help hearing that Power and his friend, as the season advanced, had become the leading hosts in London. The monkey, not being a human beast, was not so ignoble as to suffer himself to be lionised—he went nowhere, only received. Even I myself began to feel curiosity, and to consider whether I should not call: my old friendship with Power formed a sufficient excuse.

My friend Tobin of the Stock Exchange gave me some misty information about Power and his Beast.

Tobin had by daring speculation made a vast fortune, and retired from his trade or profession — whichever is the appropriate

term. He had married the daughter of an earl, cut his father, who was a shopkeeper, and so become an English gentleman. We were on terms of close intimacy.

"I really don't know what to do," said Tobin, after dinner, when he and I were alone. "Have you seen this Reuben Power every one is talking of?"

I said that I knew him.

"He gives the best entertainments in London," went on Tobin, "and is evidently a gentleman." This last word Tobin loved, and rolled often and sweetly in his mouth.

"You know the extraordinary rumours about his—his friend?"

Yes, I had heard the rumours.

"Power speculated with marvellous effect. The curious thing is, that he would have all his investments in trust for this monkey of his, and all his invitations go out signed *Scmnopithecus Rubicundus*. When you go there this confounded monkey receives you as host, and Power swears he is the host. I can't make out how he could have educated him. Do you think we ought

to go? It seems, you know, a—a sort of sacrilege? A brute, you know,—no soul, and all that?”

“A strong objection,” said I.

“Yes, isn’t it? And Professor Miller says that the Beast is not a *Semnopithecus rubicundus*, but some other awfully named animal. So even the name ain’t right.”

“That is highly suspicious.”

“Yes. And then there are drawbacks. The form there, as my wife says, is not altogether good. Passey began some good joke about—about Providence, you know, in fact about God, and found that Beast glaring so dangerously that he had to stop short. And he won’t let talking go on when there is any music.”

“He is naturally ignorant of good breeding. But the real question is, what does society say?”

“It don’t say anything, as far as I can make out, but goes. Power’s house is all the rage.”

“Then, my dear fellow,” said I, “go. You can’t be wrong.”

And, as Tobin always did the right thing, he went.

The supreme position, however, of Power's Beast in society, I learnt from Lady Champernowne. Of course, the term "Power's Beast" was used only behind the Beast's back: 'tis a very common vulgarity of smart society to pay for use of hospitality by abuse of the givers when absent. Lady Champernowne was undoubtedly a leader of smart society. Her wealth first gave her an *entrée*, association with her husband—while alive—gave her suave aitches, a cold heart brought contentment with a useless life, while ambition effected the rest. I was on terms of as close intimacy with her as with Tobin.

"My dear Colin," she wrote, "you must come to me on Thursday at six for five-o'clock tea—how absurd, is it not? You know Mr Power? *Do* you know his Beast? I trust you, dear Colin, so absolutely, that I will tell you: I *think* I have made a mistake. There! I have refused an invitation! So I want to discuss the question. We shall be

fully representatives of the best in our class.
Do come."

There was a postscript: "You know what pain many of us—I amongst the number—have felt from the rationalistic ideas some even of the *best* people have promulgated as to the Beast's soul. I have asked the Bishop of Hadleigh, and trust he will instruct us how we who are in society should think on so serious a matter. *I am sure* you will defer to his lordship's views. I do *not* think such a thing the subject for satire or even wit or humour."

I went as asked. Of course I knew I was asked for the furtherance of some ulterior purpose, not that declared.

Lady Champernowne's house was admirably appointed, and she was the only woman in London who knew how tea should be made. The butler first brewed it in a big teapot. Then, with watch in hand, he allowed it to stand the necessary time. When made, it was at once poured off into a warmed hanging silver receptacle, under which a small, very small, lamp of spirits of wine

burnt to support, not increase, the heat. Thus every cup was equally warm and of equal strength.

"At last he comes," said Lady Champenowne as I entered. "We are wild with curiosity, Mr Colin Clout, and—forgive me, Bishop—we have determined to be vulgar! Can you believe it? We intend, deliberately, to dissect Mr Power and his Beast!"

"I confess," said the Bishop, with a deprecating smile, "I'm not without curiosity myself. The phenomenon is so astounding. A monkey! Conversing with a man! Apparently imbued with the like glorious intellect man is blessed with! What vast possibilities are opened to us!"

"Is your lordship thinking of a Christian mission for the evangelisation of apes?" said Ada Kerne, the actress; "please put me down for five guineas."

The Bishop smiled sadly. "Our hands are full with human heathen, I fear," said he, "and the question of a soul——"

"Dear Bishop," broke in Lady Champenowne, "we are all of us *so* troubled on that

point! One *cannot* believe a monkey in its native state, unclothed, ignorant even of the *existence* of tailors, leading a selfish, foolish life of eating and drinking, and swinging by its tail, as I believe they do, from tree to tree, *can* have a soul! But this dear Mr Power's Beast! So different in *every* way. Living, really, like those in the best society! I am credibly informed," and here Lady Champowne's voice sank to an awed whisper, "he paid *one thousand pounds* for the flowers alone at his reception last night. After such conduct *can* we believe heaven is shut to him?"

"Bows admirably," said Mr Storace, a son of Lord Thames; "walks well, too, considerin', and one don't want a fellow to talk in society."

"It would be supremely interesting," said Shelley Chullaby, the poet, "to obtain from him—if by happy chance his mind still grasp the past—a record of feeling in his old existence. Happy life! Free from the sordid cares of our material hopes. Rejoicing in the sunshine, mourning when

heaven weeps, his simple joys centred in the varying tastes of plantains, or the numbers of his wives, spoils gained in noble strife with a well-matched opponent." There were tears in Mr Chullaby's eyes at the glorious impossibilities he had opened.

"But we don't get no forrarder," said Lady Champernowne, who was in high spirits. "You remember, Mr Storace? 'Punch'? So funny! You, Mr Colin Clout, must help us."

I raised my eyebrows.

"You knew Mr Power at Cambridge?"

"Yes; we were in the same year."

"What manner of man was he?" asked Mr Chullaby.

"A very clever fellow,—cleverest I ever knew. Good mesmerist, too. Hated men."

"What?"

"Perhaps I should say despised them."

"But," said the Bishop, "what led to his giving up his life—as I assume he must have done—to civilising a monkey?"

"I don't know, but can make a shrewd guess. He wanted a criticism from an un-

prejudiced point of view. I fancy he was of low birth, as he had no relations——”

“How sad!” said Lady Champernowne.

“Very. But he had money, and his bearing and manners were admirable. So he went where he liked, and naturally drifted into good society.”

“Why did he hate men?”

“I don’t think he did; I was wrong. He despised ’em. Thought, when most of those he saw spent their money and lives as they do, in boring themselves and each other in society, they must be next door to idiots.”

“How strange!” said Ada, dryly.

“Very. So I suspect he gave up his time to this monkey, to know what a beast like that might think of us.”

“And what does he think of us?” asked some one.

“I don’t care to know, myself,” I replied. “Personally I don’t want an opinion of myself or my fellows from an unprejudiced standpoint; I think prejudice advisable.”

“I am, as you know,” said Flamwell, “painting his portrait. Mr Power always

comes with him, and their relations to one another seem almost strained. The Beast is undoubtedly master."

"There's some story," said Storace, "of his makin' a big present to some girl?"

"Miss Kitty Champernowne?" suggested Miss Kerne, demurely.

Lady Champernowne's colour rose, struggling to show itself through her defended countenance. The question was unkind, meant to be unkind. But the answer, she felt, came best from her, the mother. Who could know what might not be concocted?

"Quite, quite true, dear Miss Kerne. Kitty, you know, is *so* young, not in years only but in heart. But time brings everything to those who wait. We were dining at the, at—where, I now forget. Of course we discussed the Beast: who does not? And I am afraid we were just a *little* bit hard. For dear Kitty suddenly cried out——"

"I was there," broke in Ada Kerne; "you all were abusing the Beast horribly. Miss Kitty was disgusted. 'Why do you enter his house, then?' she said. 'It is

cowardly and mean to abuse behind his back him you have used as a host.' And then—you remember, Lady Champernowne? —I took Kitty from the room."

"So you did. And I never thanked you! Thank you *so* much, dear Miss Kerne. Did you tell the Beast? Some one did. He was *so* touched. He sent dear Kitty a most handsome present, a diamond necklet worth ten thousand pounds,—I had it valued. Was it not princely gratitude?"

"Rich fellow," said Storace, — "regular Rothschild. Amusin', his making a present."

"Oh," interposed Lady Champernowne, "I never allow Kitty to receive presents, never. But in this case—a monkey, you see, and not an ordinary monkey——"

"Never swings by his tail," said Miss Kerne.

"*Never*. Indeed, except his valet, no one can know he has a tail. Mr Simperleep says his dress-coat is a dream."

"Have you often been to the house?" I asked.

"Naughty man," replied she, shaking her

jewelled finger at me. "But how else was I to get you? It was only a white lie, and I knew you *must* come if a lady wanted assistance."

I was more puzzled than ever why she had asked me—and to meet those present. It was public property that Flamwell and Kitty liked each other. Lady Champernowne had openly said a Champernowne could not marry a painter of no family. And Ada Kerne, why was she there?

The door opened. Kitty Champernowne, her face flushed and troubled, and Lord Dase, handsome and scowling as always, came in. Then I knew.

"My dear Frederick! My dear Kitty! How late you are! But—there, there, I will say nothing. You are not going, Mr Flamwell? You really must? Then you must say how - d'ye - do and good - bye to Kitty at once. *How* funny! *Good* - bye. You know Lord Dase? Of course. Whom does not our leading painter know? Good-bye,—*so* glad to have seen you."

I was facing Miss Kerne, and as the two

came in saw that she turned white to the lips, and only by a violent effort remained calm. I crossed over to Lady Champenowne.

"Very cleverly published," I said. "I was wondering what your white lie covered. I shall be at Mrs Weary's, Lady Dallish's, and two or three other places to-night. I won't forget."

"You are always kind, always. But you frighten me, you are *so* clever. I can't deceive you, though you know I would never, *never* try. Affection, childlike affection, dear Mr Colin Clout. But both so self-contained. You would think them complete strangers when others are present, ha! ha! When *others* are present. But——"

"I am afraid I must go," said the Bishop; "may I congratulate you?"

"You are so kind, always kind! Affection, childlike affection, my dear Bishop. But both so self-contained. You would think them complete strangers when others are present, ha! ha!"

"I quite understand," said his lordship. As doubtless he did, though a bishop.

"I feel," said Lady Champernowne, "my work on earth is now fulfilled, and I may safely join my dear husband in——"

"Quite so," interjected the Bishop, blandly.

Mr Chullaby here pulled his left coat-sleeve over his shirt-cuff, on which he had been recording notes of a sonnet, and took his departure sadly. Storace quickly followed.

Miss Kerne's colour had soon returned, and I saw a look of hard purpose settle in her face. She rose as Storace left the room. Lady Champernowne and her daughter, Dase and I, were the only others in the room.

"And must you go too?" said Lady Champernowne, somewhat uneasily, as her eyes rose to Miss Kerne's face.

"Not yet," was the reply, in a low clear voice. "I—stay, Mr Clout," she hurriedly went on as she saw me move to go; "I may want you."

Lady Champernowne half rose, but with a troubled sigh fell back in her chair. Kitty

had first looked up in astonishment at the strange fixity of Miss Kerne's face, and then sank, crying gently, into a chair. Dase had risen; his hands were clenched, his aspect more brutally hard than before. He was one of the best-born, richest, foulest-living, and worst-tempered men in London.

"Lady Champernowne," said Miss Kerne, standing over her with an almost menacing air, "this man, Lord Dase, is bound by the most solemn promises to make me his wife. If he had his will——" She paused for a time, her bosom fast rising and falling. But, with a back shake of the head, as clearing herself from a cloud of opposing passion, she went on with hard calmness. "He is bound in honour, before God, to me. I understand, from what I have seen, he is engaged to marry your daughter. Know most surely," there was now distinct menace in her voice, "that should he marry her I will kill him."

She was silent as she stood. But her body swayed, and had I not supported her she would have fallen.

I had seen Lady Champernowne in posi-

tions of difficulty before, and admired her, but never so much as I now did. She out-actressed even Ada Kerne. She kept her head bowed for a time, raised her handkerchief as in grief, and passed it over her eyes ; and then, as with heartfelt feeling, said—

“My dear Miss Kerne, I cannot regret what has taken place. I feel for you, deeply for you, knowing as I do the admirable qualities of the man you have lost. As a mother, I thank you for letting us all know he has behaved honourably to you. I am sure your character is without stain. Dear Frederick could not be party to a dishonourable intrigue. But he loves another—how madly, only he, my daughter, and myself know. Time, that blessed consoler, will, my dear young lady, heal your wounds. But never forget that during the short span of life left me I am your sincere friend.” She paused, and again had recourse to her handkerchief. “And now good-bye, *good-bye*. Forgive me if I am abrupt, but at my age the scene is too trying.”

I must confess I had difficulty in keeping

my countenance, and if I am not mistaken, a passing gleam of amusement shot over Miss Kerne's face; but for a moment, a short moment only. She had grown white as before; it was clear, if she wanted again to speak, she had no power. She leaned heavily on me as we went down-stairs and got into her hansom stiffly, as suddenly aged.

"We're not all as bad as that," said I.

Her lips quivered; she made no reply even with her eyes.

It struck me it would be interesting to see how she acted after the strain of the afternoon. She was admirable, admirable—took even the cold English audience by storm.

"I meant every word," said she when I saw her afterwards. And her eyes were clear and bright, no sign of a tear.

CHAPTER IV.

WE give the meaningless word "chance" to all happening which we cannot trace to any known cause. And this night, on leaving the Lyceum, I chanced to walk to Power's house. I had never been there before, but of course knew from general report where he and his Beast lived. It was a great corner house of a great square. The sky was clear, and I loafed along, smoking, enjoying the cool air. Just as I reached the door, Power and his Beast alighted from a hansom. I greeted Power, and bowing to the Beast, walked in with them. The Beast said something to Power, which of course I could not follow, Power replying in ordinary words, "Colin Clout, an old friend of mine." A small supper was

already prepared. I noticed the men attending us spoke the ordinary English of gentlemen, and afterwards learnt the Beast would have no one near him, in any capacity, not educated.

Looking at Power, I was struck again, as at the Opera, with the inhuman coldness and repose of his face. But now I saw, too, an equally inhuman expression of hopeless misery. Many in society affirm their lives are not worth living: their continuing existence belies them. But Power's awful deadness of aspect and regard, cut into my brain more painfully than the strongest words. The Beast's expression was fathomless, but he strangely suggested to me—how, I know not—vigorous, unprejudiced intellect. I found the two had been in a private box at the Lyceum, and, reviewing the day, found myself recording my afternoon at Lady Champernowne's. At first the two listened with courteous, well-bred indifference; but when I came to Kitty Champernowne's entry with Lord Dase, I felt the Beast was listening intently. I don't mean

he was so ill-bred as to show more than polite inattention, for his manner was that of a polished English gentleman; it was instinct only that told me of his deep interest. But when I had finished, his gentleman-like composure broke down, something had touched his nature. He rose, and, bowing to me, spoke to Power. Power then himself rose, and saying wearily, "One minute, Colin, please," walked with the Beast away from the table. I heard them conversing, the Beast's voice sharp, and, as it were, showing passion; Power's, at first listless, but slowly showing increased attention, till its tones became almost happy. They came back quietly and reseated themselves. Power's expression had brightened; but the man's hopeless unhappiness still shone out. It was as if art had badly painted happiness over natural misery.

"You know Lord Dase?" said Power.

"Yes."

"What manner of man?"

"The meanest, worst-tempered scoundrel in London; but courageous."

"In society?"

"Of course. He is rich and noble."

"Miss Champernowne?"

Before I could reply the Beast spoke.

"Don't answer," said Power, with a smile.

But his look of brightness had faded, and the smile was only the gleam of a cold polar sun over an iceberg.

"Where does Dase go?" went on Power.

"Opium at Li Chung's."

"We know the place," and the Beast nodded his head gently.

Power came down with me when I left soon after.

"What is it, man?" said I, as we stood at the open door. "You were inhuman enough at Cambridge, but now your face is the face of a lost man, a man with no hope even of hell."

He looked at me gravely.

"Yes; of a lost man," said he. Then, with even a suggestion of passion, he added, "Would to God even hell were open to me! There is for man no creation without destruction."

CHAPTER V.

MY sister had rooms in some awful place in the East End of London, that she might be near the wretched people she looked after. A terrible life. But I must admit, strange as the fact may seem, her manner did not suffer, and she was undoubtedly happy. It always seemed to me unjust that I, who sacrificed all for happiness, should be rewarded with but transient, very transient, gleams of it; while she, who put it aside as something almost non-existent, had seldom, if ever, even transient gleams of misery.

When I got back—at one in the morning—I was astonished to find her waiting for me in my room on the ground-floor, and I was astonished to see a sad, scared look

in her face. I knew something exceptional in her life must have happened.

"Oh, Colin!" she burst out as I came in, "I could not help coming—I was obliged to come. I have had such an awful dream. It seemed scarcely like a dream."

I thought it hard to be kept out of bed at that time for a dream, but said nothing. She seemed to read my thoughts, for she went on—

"I knew I should find you still up; you are never worn out by a day's hard work. I was so tired I went to bed at nine, Colin, and slept. Then I seemed to wake into a curious new life. I was standing on a black rock the size of a room, and there was nothing all round me—above, below, all round."

"Nothing?"

"Nothing. It was most terrifying. There was no space there, no sound, no movement. I knew the only things real were the rock and myself, and Mr Power, and a shadow."

Colour showed in her cheeks as she spoke the name. She had not seen him for thirty

years, but still had the feeling towards him of her youth. She was one of those women you so seldom find now in towns, who love once for all.

“He sat there—Colin, I can hardly now believe it was not fact—with his head between his hands, gazing out on the nothingness, and his eyes looked so wearily hopeless. There was a shadow near him, shapeless, but it seemed growing into form. It stood behind him, and yet he knew it was there. He could not see me. I knew all this, and it did not seem strange I should know it. While I was looking on, as sorry for him, I think, as I was frightened of the still, silent nothingness, he rose up slowly and dropped his hands and said, ‘A lost man, lost to heaven and hell. It is too late now.’ And as he spoke he saw me. He moved out of the shadow, which seemed round him, part of him, and yet it was not part of him but something growing into life of its own, and looked at me. His look, Colin, haunts me. It was weary, and in itself hopeless as ever,

and yet he seemed to find some hope in me."

"When was this?"

"I came here as soon as I could dress. The horror is still on me."

"And now you have told me?"

"Oh, Colin! He is in danger! What can I do? Can you do nothing? You know him now?"

"I have just left him. He told me he was a lost man, and prayed God even hell might be open to him."

"And my dream? The same time. He must be in danger, Colin."

"The dream must be from your sympathy with me, dear," said I. "To tell the truth, his expression, his last words, affected me deeply, and by brain - waves or Gurney's telepathy——"

Mary smiled. I saw she did not believe me—nor perhaps did I quite believe myself.

"And what does that explain, Colin? I know I should do something, but what? I have not even seen him for thirty years."

We were silent for some time, and I saw tears rise in her eyes and gently overflow.

"But I am better and calmer, dear, for having told you," said she at last. "I must pray, Colin; there may be power in prayer."

CHAPTER VI.

THE next morning, as I sat at breakfast, Mary again came in. She held a somewhat bulky letter in her hand. She put it down by me, saying—

“Please, Colin, give this to Mr Power.”

I made no reply. I went on with my breakfast in ostentatious calm. She, unlike herself, fidgeted round the room for a time, then came back to my side, broke open the letter, and said gravely—

“He must have the letter, Colin. Read it. You will see it is right he should have it.”

I knew from the beginning she must have her way, if she stuck to it, and with a sigh read as I was told. There is no need to give the contents in full. She told of her dream, and prayed Power to change his life ; prayed

him to leave companionship with the Beast, and use his wealth to good purpose.

"You will give it, Colin?"

"Yes."

"And soon?"

"Now, after breakfast."

She kissed me and walked away. She still looked sad, poor girl, and weary. I guessed she had not slept after leaving me, but had spent the night writing. How much had she written, before content?

About twelve I walked over to Power's. Power was still at breakfast. The Beast sat at a distant table opening letters and writing replies. Something exceptional in my expression must have struck Power, for he said, soon after I had seated myself—

"If you wish to say anything to me, say it now. I never leave my friend."

"But——"

"But, as I told you, I never leave my friend. Doubtless he would go if I asked him, but I cannot ask him. You must treat him as myself, as my *alter ego*. Yes," he smiled slightly, "my *alter ego*."

Without a word I put Mary's letter into his hands.

He read it through slowly and carefully. If possible, the weary hopelessness of his expression deepened as he perused it.

"Thirty years," sighed he,—“after thirty years!”

He took the letter up again, and again read it through. Then placing it on the table, he threw himself back in his chair and stared at the writing with an inscrutable look. He was long silent. At last, in a dull, monotonous voice he spoke.

“I loved her, Colin. It seems I love her still. Leaving her was—is—the one good, unselfish act of my life. And yet—— She is happy?”

“Very happy.”

He bowed his head as thankful, and was again silent, a sad smile on his lips. At last he rose, went to another table, and wrote. He closed the letter, then suddenly broke it open and came back to me.

“I read Mary's,” said I.

“Then read this. It is better so.”

"My dear Mary," ran the letter, "your letter has moved me as I thought nothing could move me. Listen, my dear. I am more glad each passing day that I left you. If I had let you give yourself to me, you too might have been lost. Blot me out of your life as a thing beyond human hope. There is no hope for me. I have trodden a path closed to man; earth itself is hell, and beyond, for me, annihilation. No heaven, no hell. Pray for me, if it comfort you. But there is no hope."

As I finished reading, the Beast walked up to us, and Power put his hand on his shoulder. He seemed to find some strange relief from the contact, but I saw the Beast shiver, as moved by fear or anger.

As I passed through the hall, in the shade of one corner a little man stood, muffled in a great cloak covering his head. I saw only his gleaming eyes, and recognised them. But I had walked some distance before it struck me who the man was. It was, I knew, Li Chung.



When I gave Mary Power's letter, she sat down and read it before me.

"I shall pray for him, Colin," said she. And there was hope in her eyes.

It was a terribly coarse neighbourhood where Mary lived,—the women drunken drabs with filthy rags, their wrinkled breasts often bare; the men as dirtily clad, their eyes bloodshot and cheeks flabby and pendent from drink, their mouths expelling foul saliva and fouler language. They mobbed me as I came out, and, I fancy, not only my life but my coat and hat were in danger. Mary heard the noise, and came out. Considering our relationship, I thought her manner unnaturally calm.

"You silly people!" said she, in a loud clear voice. "Don't you know that's my brother?"

When these words were heard from her the disgusting attack on me suddenly ceased, and was succeeded by almost as disgusting offers of assistance. But, at least, I got away with my coat and hat untouched.

It was on the night of that day, or the night after, that in the smoking-room of the United University I met Lord Dase. He came up, in fact, to find me. There was only one other man there,—I sat in the anteroom,—who soon left.

"I want your advice," said Dase.

I was silent. One can always satisfy the asses who want advice without involving oneself,—though, by the way, Dase was not an ass, and the last man I should have thought likely to ask advice from any one—unless the devil.

"You know Ada Kerne?"

"Yes."

"You were at Lady Champernowne's when she made that confounded attack on me?"

"You know that as well as I do."

"Well, don't be sulky. I'm in a hole, and can't see my way out. And then, you know, I've really treated her badly."

"Who?"

"Ada. Really badly, and I'm sorry for it."

He took a letter from his breast-pocket.

"Read that," said he, giving it to me.

There were four lines, asking him to be at Li Chung's at half-past ten at night on the following Thursday. It was signed Ada Kerne.

"Is it her writing?"

"No doubt about it." He laughed. "I know it considerably too well. Would you go?"

Now I make it a rule never to interfere with other men's business. I had always been interested in Dase's life—he was such an exceptionally unmitigated scoundrel. But I had never interfered to protect men or women—especially women—from him; so I did not see why I should interfere to protect him from a woman.

"You don't funk the danger?" said I.

He only laughed. To do the man justice, that ingredient would, I knew, tend to make him go.

"Then why don't you go?"

"By God! I will," said he.

"Mind, I haven't suggested it."

"No, you're too damned selfish to risk even that."

He toyed with the letter for a time, and then said—

"I want you to keep this. If anything happens, that young hell-cat shan't escape."

I suppose I like Ada Kerne, for I took the letter and went off with it to the Lyceum. I found her in her room. As I stood outside I heard her say, "I wish men were beasts; they're a thousand times straighter. Men are devils."

The stage-manager was with her. He bowed and walked away as I came in. I showed Ada the letter.

"Yes; I wrote it," said she, handing it back.

"Rather dangerous?"

"Not a bit," she laughed. "You're on the wrong tack, Mr Colin Clout, quite the wrong tack."

"But if anything happens to him?"

"I don't care a hang. Perhaps something *will* happen." Her face was hard. "But you're on the wrong tack."

“Anyhow, this is safer.” And I doubled up the letter and used it for a cigarette, powdering the ashes in the grate.

“Thank you,” said she, “but it didn’t matter.”

CHAPTER VII.

It was on the Wednesday or Thursday of the second week that I received a note from Lady Champernowne asking me to come and see her, as she was in trouble. "I must be at home," she wrote, "as, under the peculiar circumstances, I must not suffer any suspicion to exist. But I think no one will come."

That she was in trouble, and that she expected no one to come, was, when I got there, clear, for she was not presentable. Her face was only half finished, and showed marks of tears.

"It is so good of you to come, Colin," said she—"so good. And you don't mind, do you? I wouldn't let the world know what you see; but you are never deceived,

never. Sit down. I want to talk before tea comes."

"Is Kitty quite well?" I asked.

She looked at me half-suspiciously.

"We have not seen Lord Dase for a week," said she, impressively and half-fearfully.

"Since last Thursday?" I asked, thinking of Ada Kerne's letter.

"No, not since Wednesday. On Thursday I had a Noah's Ark: it was my day, as you know, though you never come. Lord Dase had promised he would come. He did not. We have not seen him since Wednesday. He was *so* nice then. I have sent to his chambers, asked everywhere, but can learn nothing."

"Have you asked Miss Kerne?" I spoke perhaps maliciously, but with an object.

"Oh, Colin! How could I? But she could not know. She is a most *strange* creature. Just fancy. She came here herself on Thursday, late, with that man with the dead eyes and wet leathery face—Lord, Lord——"

"Lord Corpeston?"

"Yes, Lord Corpeston. But *think* of her coming after her conduct to me and Lord Dase! And with Lord Corpeston, at such a time! Really, Colin, I don't know what to think."

I knew Ada Kerne was absolutely indifferent to the world's opinion of her, but I could scarcely believe she would accept Lord Corpeston's escort at such a time. She must have had some very strong reason for acting as she had. It was suspicious that the night she had fixed to meet Lord Dase was the night of her coming, so strangely accompanied, to Lady Champernowne's. Lord Corpeston was an old fellow, a great frequenter of Li Chung's. It struck me Lord Dase might be dead.

"You are sure she came with Corpeston?"

"Quite sure. She told me so herself. And she said, too, they had come together from some barbarous place, Li something."

"Li Chung's?"

"Yes, that was it. Is it a dreadful place? And when she told me she laughed, and

Lord Corpeston laughed and said, 'Fie! fie! have pity, Miss Kerne, on my grey hairs, if not on your own bright eyes.' And then she laughed again."

"And Kitty? Is she troubled?"

"She has been very strange—very strange indeed. She kissed me this morning, really, as if she loved me, and cried. She kept to her room afterwards, and——"

There was a knock at the door below. We both listened. Some one came in.

"Keep them for ten minutes," said Lady Champernowne; "I can't receive like this;" and she darted from the room, only just in time to avoid Shelley Chullaby.

"My dear Colin,"—Mr Chullaby supported his position in great part by barefaced familiarity with almost strangers,—
"I am most glad to find you here. Your presence will take from the terrible task thrown on me."

"Terrible task?"

"Ay, terrible indeed." He pulled down his shirt-cuffs, shook his head to cast back his long hair, and continued with portentous

gravity: "It was a dark, lowering morning—a morn redolent of crime, breathing of brutal deeds, of——"

"What morning?"

"*This* morning—the morning of this day, or rather afternoon."

"Go on."

"I wandered, as I have wandered not seldom, by the Thames Embankment. Noble work! In the yellow flood of Thames, lapped to almost lifelike motion, I saw a body—the body of a man. Two men in a boat pursued it, grappled it, and brought it to the stairs below Cleopatra's Needle. With almost a woman's care, they raised it on to the steps. With reverence, belying their rough exterior, they washed from the pallid face the slime and ooze of Thames, and I saw——"

He paused for effect.

"Lord Dase," said I.

He frowned a little, as I spoiled his effect, and mildly continued: "Lord Dase—yes, Lord Dase. Dead, Colin, quite dead. The poor pallid body, no longer animated by the noble spirit, but showing in every feature—

in eyes and mouth and nose, in the raven hair and flowing beard—the calm, the sweet repose, of the grand old English nobleman and gentleman. This have I come to break to our dear friend. It will be an awful blow for Kitty.”

I looked at the man to see if he spoke sincerely; but his face, through always self-consciousness, showed real sorrow. I think, when we talk to such men admitted amongst us, we forget how shallow and vulgar we really are, and catch some of their belief in our chivalry and magnanimity.

“I doubt if Miss Kitty will suffer much,” said I.

“Oh, say not so! Think rather of——” But his rhapsody was broken by the entrance of Lady Champernowne, twenty years younger, with the unbroken pink-and-white complexion of a healthy girl.

“Oh, Mr Chullaby! how good of you to come when I least expected you! I am so delighted. It must be a new volume of poetry? What *is* the name, and where *can* I get it?”

"No renewed feeble effort of my own has brought me, dear friend. I am sad. I——"

"And you want comfort? How flattering of you to come to *me*! *Tell* me;" and the well-made shell of youth was seated by its owner on a sofa, and, casting a glance of sensuous tenderness on the poet, motioned him to sit near.

Chullaby seated himself as seduced, and pulling down his shirt-sleeves, and shaking his head to cast back his long hair, began with tender gravity—

"It was a dark lowering morning"—I knew the impostor had prepared his story before he came in, and would inflict it on her as he had on me—"a morn redolent of crime breathing of brutal——"

"Is it a poem, after all?" said Lady Champernowne, repressing astonishment.

"I would, it were," said Chullaby, "——breathing of brutal deeds. Prepare yourself, dear madam. When I wandered——" And in almost the self-same words he had used to me, he recounted his

morning's adventure. Till he came to the name. There he paused and looked at me.

"It was Lord Dase," said I.

Up went the handkerchief to the eyes bereaved of a mother-in-law's love, and Lady Champernowne fell back as struck with sudden grief. But I don't believe she was much surprised. She must have half expected the *dénouement*. It would have been worth a minute's laughter to be able to follow her thoughts. How best to use the death? What attitude for society should she adopt? As I pondered, I saw her handkerchief gently lowered and her eyes fixed on me. In a moment the defence was raised again, and her left hand moved to Chullaby, who seized it in his right, an expression of fatuous content in his face.

"Oh, my dear, dear friends!" broke out suddenly the Baron's widow. "How he loved her! How passionately, how — You are sure, both quite sure, it was Lord Dase?"

"How could I be deceived in those pecu-

liarily fascinating features?" said Chullaby, still holding the hand. "It was the face of no common mortal. The patent of English nobility shone from it even in death."

"And he was drowned?"

"Undoubtedly. No craven hand had marred the marble body, the impassive features, even with a scratch. Thames itself was kind to its noble victim."

"How sad! how very, very sad! And yet I seem to feel the hand of Providence was there."

"The hand of Providence?" said I.

"The hand of Providence. How awful, Colin, if that grave stern nobleman had married my only daughter, loving her with all the strength of twenty generations of pure blood, and she had not returned his affection! Think what might have been! And lately I have feared Kitty's heart was, is, still free. She may have been unkind to him—she *was* unkind to him, I see it now. And this is the end! May it be a lesson to my dear child never again to tamper with the strongest feelings of weak mortality!

How thankful I am Kitty is free! The title, dear Colin, I think, goes to the brother. The estates of course follow."

"All entailed, I believe," said I, smiling.

"Always the same light-hearted creature!" said she. "But the subject is too grave, too sad, for laughter. I must comfort dear Lord Dase. I must see him at once with Kitty. Oh, *dear* Mr Chullaby, you have broken the awful event so kindly, so gently, so eloquently, with such poetic sympathy, to *me*, that you must break it to dear Kitty! *Would* you ring the bell? Twice please, for Kitty's maid."

A girl with a white scared face came in.

"Oh! if you please, my lady, I can't find Miss Champernowne: we've looked everywhere. All we found was this letter. On her dressing-table, my lady—addressed to you, my lady."

"Give it to me." Lady Champernowne spoke sharply and quickly. I guessed the purport of the letter, and wondered what she would do. But it is always the unexpected that happens. She surprised us both—

Chullaby gave forth a rabbit-like scream—by bursting into a loud laugh.

“Water, Colin! water, quick!” cried Chullaby, and he moved to support her.

“No, no! I am quite well,” said she, waving him back; “but thank you so much, dear Mr Chullaby. How wicked of me to laugh at such a time, after so terrible a loss! But you remember, Colin—you remember, dear Mr Chullaby—I spoke of the hand of Providence? You remember? Kitty did *not* love him. Ah! when can a mother’s eye be deceived? A mother’s heart? So awful to her was marriage with that man—I always feared his temper was bad—that she has run off with Mr Flamwell, and they will be married to-day, if not now man and wife. You know Mr Flamwell? The rising artist? They say he had *one thousand pounds* for painting the portrait of the Dowager-Duchess of Holwick-Sheveningen. An admirable portrait, *quite* like the dear Duchess—I must introduce you to her next season, dear Mr Chullaby.”

“But——” began Chullaby, whose aston-

ishment was so extreme that his hair even attempted to rise against the placid but irresistible power of Rowland's Macassar.

"But," interrupted Lady Champernowne, playfully tapping his hand with her fan, "when was a mother deceived? Do you think I have known nothing? Have you thought me capable of controlling the affections of my only daughter? Fie, fie, Mr Chullaby!"

"Admirable woman! admirable mother!" half sobbed Chullaby, fully convinced; "and you knew this all the time?"

Again the fan came into play.

"No matter what I knew, poet," said she, with a smile, full of meaning as Lord Burleigh's nod. "Remember, *noblesse oblige*. Oh! if I could but for one moment break from the shackles of society! But 'tis impossible, impossible. Suffice it I am content. Content. Happy. I bow, with gratitude, to the hand of Providence watching over us."

"But," said Chullaby, as we parted at the street-door, "I cannot resist a lurking doubt

that in Lady Champernowne's conduct there was something strange, something of the unexpected."

"From the human standpoint must there not be something of the strange, the unexpected, in the woman of society?" I replied. "Remember, my Chullaby, as your dear friend Lady Champernowne said, *noblesse oblige*."

Before leaving I had taken an opportunity, behind the poet's back, to warn Lady Champernowne very strongly against letting any one know of Ada Kerne's threat against Lord Dase. "There must be no scandal," said I. "Why, if known, you might be called as a witness in a law court."

"Horrible!" she whispered. "You have my word, Colin. And—and Kitty? I could not break my only daughter's heart, could I?"

"Of course not. The matter is quite simple. You at first doubted her fixed affection for Dase, but when you knew——"

"Quite so," said she. "I may trust you? And you may implicitly trust me.

I know how interested you are in Miss Kerne."

"The world shall know the truth," I replied, ignoring the reference to Miss Kerne. "I go to-night to Lady ——, and the Countess ——."

"You silly man! But you quite understand?"

"Quite."

CHAPTER VIII.

CHULLABY separated soon after we left Lady Champernowne's door. He had fallen into deep meditation over the events of the day, and was evidently suffering from some poetic conception. In pity for the poor fellow I allowed myself to appear impressed: nineteenth-century poets live on public appreciation of their labour; it matters little if their premature offspring be still-born. But, in fact, I was thinking of Ada Kerne. It seemed clear to me Dase had been murdered; and if Ada had kept her appointment with him on the Thursday, I felt some suspicion might attach to her, in spite of the feeling of security she had shown when I last saw her. Still, even if she had kept the appointment, Lord Dase had

apparently not been murdered till some seven days later. As I passed through Regent Circus the newsboys were shouting, "Mysterious death of a nobleman! Death by drowning! Murder of an Earl!"

The papers of Friday and Saturday were of course full of the death. But none suggested a clue of any kind. All pointed to foul play, though pure accident seemed the simplest solution.

I had not seen Mary on the Friday or Saturday, and on Sunday went to her rooms. There was a troubled, half-frightened expression on her face as she greeted me.

"Shall I go?" I asked, a little piqued.

"No, dear; please stay."

She was working at the stitching of some coarse material, and went on in silence for a time. I saw tears fall.

"Colin," said she at last, "I have been so troubled during the last week, so troubled. The dream won't leave me. I see him always. Standing always in blank nothingness, but looking to me, oh! so sadly, as for help. What can I do?"

"You have heard of this murder?"

She looked up, as in fearful surprise.

"But that has nothing to do with him?
With them?"

I had not been conscious till she spoke of what I must have suspected. Her question seemed to unlock some part of thought, till then closed. I reflected on what I had told Power and his Beast, of the Beast's strong feeling, of the seeing Li Chung in the house. But I put apart suspicion as unfounded.

"Nothing," I replied. "They had no interest in the death."

"What can I do, Colin?"

No reply came to me. I have no belief in dreams, but this dream seemed to touch and make vibrate my nerves. Still, for me, it had no meaning. I could give no comfort.

On the Monday I got again a letter from Lady Champernowne. "Pray come at once. A man will be here to question me, I think at two." The letter was hurriedly written. It was half-past two when I read. I went off at once.

An ordinary-looking man, with an expres-

sionless face, that seemed familiar to me, was seated with Lady Champernowne.

"Why didn't you come before?" whispered she. "Let me introduce Mr——"

"Strudwick," said the man. "I took you over Nat Dawson's and Kate Hamilton's last year."

I remembered the fellow; he was a private detective.

"I told Mr Strudwick," said Lady Champernowne nervously, "you were coming, and that you knew Miss Kerne and Lord Dase. I think, really, I had better leave you. I am afraid I can tell you nothing, Mr Strudwick."

"You've told me all I want, my lady," said Strudwick, with a twinkle in his eye; "but I shouldn't mind just talking a little with Mr Colin Clout. I was going to call on you, Mr Colin Clout; but if you don't mind, and her ladyship don't mind, now'll do just as well."

"Oh, pray stay as long as you like. *Good-bye*; I am so glad to have seen you, so glad." And she left the room tremulously.

"Now, sir," said Strudwick, when she had

gone, "this is the rummest case I have been on for years. I was put on,—it don't matter by who,—on Friday week, the day after Lord Dase disappeared. Perhaps you might help me. If you don't choose to, you don't, but I want to put some questions. I've nothing to keep back myself."

"How do you know there's been foul play?"

"It's a clear case of murder. The man was drowned, no doubt of that. But when? Why, *before* he was put in the river; and not long before. That's the difficulty. I've had three doctors on it, and they all agree. I wish they didn't. It's murder, though. If that body had been knocking about in the Thames for even a few hours, there'd have been some marks. It was slimy, but the slime didn't come from the river. There wasn't a scratch, not the mark of a woman's little finger-nail, on it. It was prepared, and floated gently on the water."

"Have you any clue?"

"I don't mind telling you. There's dozens, but they all point to murder seven days

before the body was found, and there the doctors stand in the way. Look here. You answer my questions, and I'll reel the whole thing off. I know you like these sort of things."

"Put your questions," said I.

"Mind, I'm only wanting sort of further assurance. First, last Friday week you went to Mr Power's?"

"Yes."

"You saw Li Chung there?"

I hesitated.

"It's all right, sir, only for further assurance."

"I saw him there."

"Friday or Saturday night Lord Dase gave you a letter from Miss Kerne fixing to meet him on Thursday at Li Chung's? Mind I know it; Miss Kerne told me."

"Yes, I had the letter."

"The same night you saw Miss Kerne, showed her the letter; she said she'd wrote it, and you tore it up?"

"Yes."

"That's about all as far as you're con-

cerned. It reels off beautifully. I do believe I'd have a case against Li Chung or Miss Kerne, if she wasn't so damn open, and if the doctors weren't in the way. Listen. At half-past ten at night, Thursday week, Miss Kerne met Lord Dase at Li Chung's as appointed. I've seen her. She admits it, and says she took a knife to kill him. She was back by a quarter to eleven, and acted as Jack Gauntlet at the Lyceum. Lord Dase walked there with her. At the theatre she told him to go back to Li Chung's and she would follow, soon after half-past eleven. Why didn't she kill him at Li Chung's? She laughs, and says she hadn't a chance. At half-past eleven she's at Li Chung's publicly. Lord Corpeston saw her, heard her ask for Lord Dase, heard her told he wasn't there, never lost sight of her till she went with him to Lady Champernowne's. The last time Lord Dase was seen was at the theatre that Thursday night at a quarter to eleven with Miss Kerne. His drowned body is found a week later in the Thames. But drowned at most within twelve hours, pro-

bably three or four. I was put on to the job on the Friday, as I told you. I only learnt all this after the body was found. Now why did Miss Kerne fix on Li Chung's for an interview? She explains. She knew he went there, and thought it a good, quiet place to settle him. Why did she go with Lord Corpeston to Lady Champernowne's? To complete an *alibi*? What did she know? Did Lord Dase go back, as appointed, to Li Chung's? She wasn't there. I have found there was a secret entrance to Li Chung's. But she says she didn't know that. And if he went back, where was he till he was drowned a week after? You see, there's no case against Miss Kerne. She may know something; but then, again, she mayn't. She's difficult to deal with, because she ain't like most women. I don't believe she cared for Lord Dase: she can take care of herself, and there wasn't anything wrong, I bet a thousand. And yet she admits she meant to kill him. I think the clue's somewhere else. I've offered £1000 for proof Lord Dase went back to Li Chung's."

"Have you searched Li Chung's place?"

"Yes; and made nothing of it. You know the little rooms with the heavy curtains for doors? They attracted me, I don't know why. But we found nothing, nothing."

"There's another rum part of it," he went on, after a time. "This Li Chung was at Mr Power's on the Friday before. Why? Mr Power won't say anything. Miss Kitty Champernowne, engaged to Lord Dase, runs off with her sweetheart just before the body's found. Mr Power's Beast has given her a present worth £1000. Why? Because, Lady Champernowne says, she stood up for him when he was laughed at. I don't believe it. A man don't show such gratitude, much less a beast. I can't make anything out of it."

"Well, let me know if anything else is found," said I, rising.

"I will, sir; but I rather think we shan't get any forrarder."

CHAPTER IX.

How or why, it is difficult to say, but during the three days after I had seen Strudwick at Lady Champernowne's the papers seemed to have banded together to throw suspicion on Power and his Beast of the murder. And the suspicion was taken up strongly by society in general—so strongly that on the Wednesday, when Power received, the whole street was crowded with carriages. Curiosity took me there, and a strange thing happened. When the crush in the rooms was at its greatest, there was a sudden cry of fire. The rush of people was appalling. I got out safely myself, and stood watching the flames as they grew and grew, louder in roar and fiercer in heat. The Beast stood near, looking on calmly.

"Where is Power?" said I. As I spoke a figure appeared at a window on the second storey. In the waving, scintillating light, broken by times of darkness as the flames rose and fell and masses of wind-moved smoke came and went, it was impossible to see clearly. But I knew the figure was that of Power, and as I looked, he seemed to me to fix his eyes calmly and almost as in triumph on the Beast. The Beast saw him, and on the instant his manner changed. All calmness was gone, his face was distorted with rage, he growled inarticulately. Not far from us some firemen were moving a fire-escape to the house. Seizing me by the arm, the Beast with his prodigious strength made our way with supreme ease to the escape. The firemen quickened their movements, the ladder was placed elongated, and the Beast running up it, in time almost as short as I take to write. When or how, I know not, but he had cast off his clothing, and it was a nude hairy monster that rose above the crowd. As Power saw the Beast's approach, he made as to retreat into the seething fire

behind him, and I was strangely impressed with the feeling that he was moved by fear, not of his perilous position but of the rescuing Beast. But the Beast quickly stood on the lintel, threw Power over his back, and there holding him, came down almost as sharply as he had gone up. The crowd cheered loudly as he reached the ground, and some even wept when it was seen both were little hurt. The next day the papers were full of the Beast's praises, and all suspicion against him and Power was dropped.

While I was at breakfast the next day, after sleeping badly, Strudwick came in.

"It's all over," said he, "and we've been done. Yesterday, the day of the fire, two of Li Chung's Chinamen came and proved Lord Dase went back to Li Chung's by the secret way after leaving Miss Kerne. They got the money too. We went off at once. And what did we find? Li Chung dead from an overdose of opium. And that's the end of it, I bet a thousand."

Now I always walk to the United University from my rooms at half-past one.

The same day, just beyond the Junior Army and Navy, a Chinaman, whom I had never seen before, touched me on the arm and put into my hand a small worked bag. I opened it at the Club. Inside were £5000 in notes, and a written paper in Chinese characters. Bolster, who was always there, read it for me. In effect, it stated the money belonged to Li Chung's daughter, and told how she could be found. The same day I handed over the money to her. It was no business of mine to consult any one, though I suspected the money had some connection with the murder of Dase. I like to be a spectator of exceptional events; I object to be mixed up in even the smallest degree as a participator.

The next week Power and his Beast gave four brilliant receptions. I didn't go to any, as they seemed as objectless as such things generally are. But they had the effect of bringing Flamwell forward; and as he refused to paint more than four portraits in a year, keeping back some time for what he

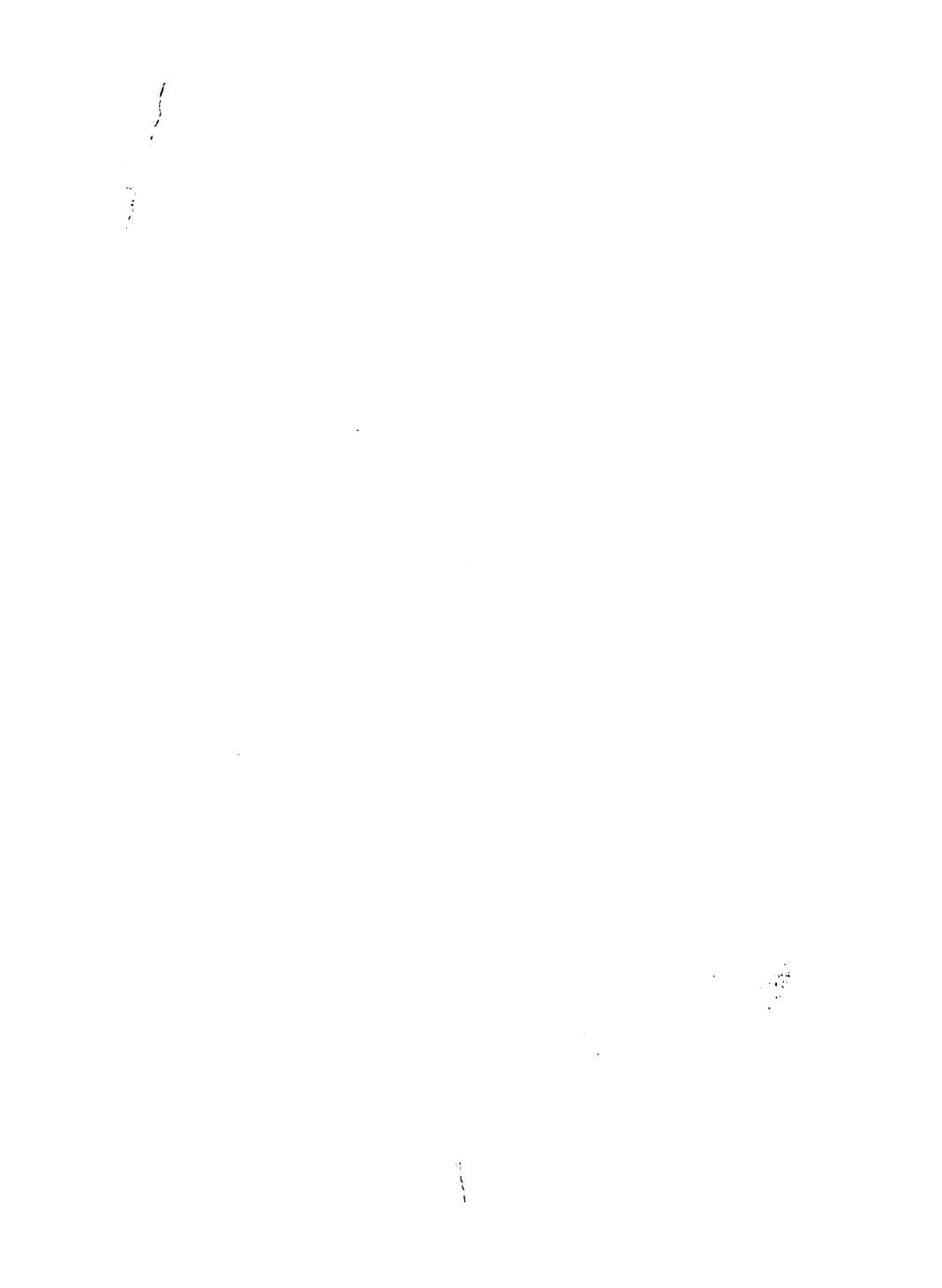
considered nobler efforts in art, he made sure of a fairly large income.

The second week I called on Power, but was told he and his Beast had gone into the country. Thereon I put the two out of my life. The story of Lord Dase's murder, the relation between Power and his Beast, were but things of tags and ends. I should have been glad to be able to fill in the details of the murder, to unravel the history of Power and his Beast; but that seemed impossible. So I cast all aside, and pursued my old life—or existence rather. Strangely enough, the explaining clue came later to me.

I forgot to say my sister, shortly before Power and the Beast went out of town, had gone down, to continue her always life of charity, to Starr.

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PART II.

WRITTEN BY POWER'S BEAST

CHAPTER I.

"Welcome, thou great nature, savage but not false, not unkind, unmotherly; . . . speak thou to me, O mother, and sing my sick heart thy mystic everlasting lullaby-song, and let all the rest be far!"—CARLYLE.

"Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle."

—SHELLEY.

I REMEMBER vaguely, and as a former life, the time before Reuben Power found and took me away. A life in the forest, of perfect health and virgin strength, with many of my kind; a life taking no thought for the morrow, a life above thought; free from the conscious restraint of any law, the daily sufficient food gained by daily sufficient labour; a life of perfect, of pure happiness—instinctive happiness from reasonable life and the un-

affected intercourse of living creatures. But above all was the divine happiness—lost to me now, scarcely felt in my after-life of misery till the end was near—from conscious unity with, part in nature herself, under the Great unknown Being who pervades all things animate and inanimate.

Then, looking back, comes a long sad time of some horrible striving—a striving of something in me, yet foreign to my instinct, to conquer nature. In all that time there stand out clearly but two things—a man and a whip. The man I now know was Reuben Power. Unconscious of strife, I yet strove madly—Godlike instinct striving its hardest against devilish intellect. The end soon came.

I woke one morning with new life. I was conscious of individuality. I knew I could think, and felt power to will. All through my being rushed a feeling of inordinate pride. I was a monkey, and so—at that time—felt inferiority to man, whom I then recognised as a distinct, superior being. But I knew, too, I was greater than the

whole tribe of monkeys. I could think and will.

The feeling of pride, though born from thought, was still feeling, and it was different in kind to anything I had before experienced. Before, all feeling had been in me, as in all God's created nature, alive and dead: I had then been but a happy, almost unconscious, part of one great whole. Now, that feeling was gone, lost for ever. Now, with thought came pride, and with pride separation from, strife with, nature. Nature could not think, natural beasts could not think. I was superior to nature, must use knowledge to overcome nature. I longed to prove my superiority.

There were two of us that Power was teaching. He kept us together. The other was stronger physically than I. But he had not yet learned to think. Instinct was stronger in him than in me.

One day I concealed a great stone, and rose up at night when he slept and crushed in his head. I struck again and again, till it was a bloody irrerecognisable mass. I felt

intense happiness, but a new manner of happiness. The noise I made brought the man Power. As he came in, I stood with the stone in my hand looking at the dead monkey, and debating whether I should strike again. When he saw me, enraged and armed, he hesitated, and there was fear in his face. Fool that I was! I might have known then he was my servant. I might have known what I took so long to learn, that man's boasted intellect is but cut from, and carved, if laboriously, intricately carved from, physical nature; that with intellect in the field the question is still but a question of physical strength. I stood there stronger in body, armed with the stone. He was at my mercy. Fool that I was! The mastery, had I but known it, was with me.

He cringed in habitude and let him thrash
 my with the whip.
 pride.
 time—I
 recognised
 But I knew,

CHAPTER II.

"The staircase of Brick Court is said to have been filled with mourners, the reverse of domestic ; women without a home, without domesticity of any kind ; with no friend but him they had come to weep for ; outcasts of that great, solitary, wicked city, to whom he had never forgotten to be kind and charitable."—FORSTER'S 'Life of Goldsmith.'

AGAIN a long sad time passed—a time still of the man and the whip. Gradually the whip was laid aside—not from any awakening of pity in the man, but because its shadow, which lay on me, was more effective ; imagination woke in me with power of thought, and fear of an imagined whip was stronger than fear of the whip I knew. And, too, now a conscious being, I began to struggle with, not against, the man Power—to struggle on the side of intellect against instinct. And at last articulate

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speech came, following, not preceding, reason. I could exchange thought with Power. And soon, with speech, though understood by him alone of all men, I learnt how to read and how to write.

A strange period followed, in which man was my God. I read of his great works, of his triumphs over the material, of his goodness, magnanimity, and altruism. It seemed the life of man must be supremely noble and happy, a very paradise of existence. I found food more than enough for every human being, habitation but a question of voluntary effort, so that all could live in palaces. There was leisure, after reasonable physical toil, for each man to indulge in literature, art, or science; while the advanced skill of physicians and surgeons must ameliorate, if not extinguish, accidental bodily pain.

"What a glorious existence is that of man!" I said to Power, "and, under God, he has made himself. What have I not to thank you for! You have changed my existence from an almost unconscious part

of nature to that of one of millions on millions of pure, almost godlike, beings revelling in daily conscious effort for increase of knowledge and advance of command over the forces of nature for the greater earthly happiness and eternal welfare of man."

Power but smiled. An unpleasant smile.

"I could almost worship you," I went on, my heart moved by strong gratitude. "What do I not owe to you!" And I made as to kiss his hand. But he repulsed me.

"You have but read of men," said he, coldly; "you must not judge till you have seen them."

"Shall I judge of men by Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot, by writers of romance?" said I, full of my then earnest belief. "Why, their own lives belie their written words! Am I to believe that men capable of thought, with lives of glorious exertion open to them, are but made up of a few Don Quixotes, Colonel Newcomes, and Uncle Tobies, while the mass reject the heaven open to them for lives of ignoble



toil, idle dissipation, and even sin? No, no! Lord Steyne never lived, Becky Sharpe never betrayed her husband, Shylock is but a monstrous invention. They are but foils to show more strongly how godlike is man as he in fact exists."

"You have not seen men," said Power.

"Can you pretend," I went on, hotly, "that men really exist who are liars, adulterers, thieves? That men really exist who spend their lives in luxurious idleness? That men really exist who, because of ancestry, believe themselves superior to their fellows, and yet lead despicable lives of gluttonous ease supported by the hopeless toil of the very creatures they despise? Impossible! Why, you make man lower before God than the ant or bee. Impossible!"

"You have not seen men," said Power.

And yet, with this glorious vista of future life before me, I suffered from an ever-present consciousness of some great loss, painful though undefined.

Up to this time we had lived severely alone, far from human habitations. My

only contact with men had been through the medium of books. Power, I think, had always had a sufficient supply of money; but he began to speculate, and at first his speculations turned out badly. Soon I began to take an interest in what he did, and he acted more and more on my advice. I was lucky. There is no need now to show in detail how my influence grew. Let it be taken as strange, the fact remains that ultimately the investment of all money was left to me, and, as I have said, I was lucky.

"We are rich," said Power, one day; "we can go amongst men."

"Must we have riches for that?" I asked.

"You will see," said he, with his unpleasant smile.

Power took a villa near Naples, looking over the bay, with a beautiful half-wild garden. He got it through a Greek, a Mr Agelasto.

"There may be some difficulty," said the man, "if the monkey lives with you."

"Speak of him as my friend," said Power.
"What difficulty?"

"Well, the Italians are strange people, they take strange prejudices," was the reply.

We lived quietly in this house for more than a week. Power had clothed me in man's dress, and I walked as men walk. I but noticed that those we passed seemed to shrink from me. This, however, affected me little, as I knew nothing of men personally. If it had any effect, it but strengthened the feeling in me of some indefinable loss.

One day a gorgeously - dressed official called on Power. I was present, but the man spoke in Italian, and Power told me afterwards what took place.

"I would ask, sir, how long you remain?" said the man.

"I cannot tell; why do you want to know?" said Power.

The man shrugged his shoulders. "It is for your good, and that of your friend,"—they had all quickly adopted that term for me. "The Italians, the ignorant country-

people, have prejudices, believe even in witchcraft. What can one do?"

"I will take the risk," said Power.

Power took me daily to drive about Naples itself. I saw many handsome streets lined with great shops, where the people worked in daily monotonous toil. But for the most part I saw narrow uncleanly lanes, lined with hovels, inhabited by dirty ill-clad men and women. We visited many great buildings of art and science—for the most part empty.

"Where are the people who lead reasonable lives?" said I.

"They are few," replied Power; "these masses support them."

"Do these masses care nothing for art?"

"Almost nothing."

"For science?"

"They are ignorant even of its principles."

"For literature?"

"They have their literature," said Power, with a sneer.

"And is the life you have shown me the life of the masses?"

"Yes."

"You lie!" cried I, anger breaking from me. "You have brought me to the sink of the world! You hate men, you would have me hate them, you show no fair picture."

"All cities are the same," replied Power, coldly; "even the few lead ignoble lives, only the very few a reasonable life. But you must judge for yourself."

I was thrown into deep perplexity of thought. The glorious opportunities open to man were facts; he was gifted with intellect to know and seize them. Was intellect a curse? or was Power for some vile reason misleading me?

And always there was present in me the sense of some great loss. I reviewed all I had read, and now from a different standpoint I doubted the pure greatness of man.

I always rose with the sun, and walked to a little dell with a clear pool of water, to bathe. This time, alone with nature, was to me always the most pleasant of the day. One morning I had bathed, and was sitting

by the bank of the clear little pool, the trees round me rustling in the soft morning breeze. I felt at peace. But the sadness of man, not the happiness of the beast, was on me.

As I sat, a little child, naked, scarcely able to walk, crept up to me on its hands and feet. I remained still and silent, with a strange fluttering at my heart, anxious to know what the child would do. It came close to me, and when not ten feet off sat down and laughed. I put out my hand gently. It came nearer, and again stopped and laughed. I remained still, not letting my face move. Then, rising to its feet, it made a little rush and threw itself on me, laughing from its pretty face to its dimpled feet, its body shaking with delight.

As it touched me, something that held my heart seemed to burst away. All sadness was gone. I saw the clear water, the green grass, the waving trees as I had seen them in my former life. I was again part of nature, and again felt the presence in me and all things of the great God above. I was so

happy as I held the little child that man's relief of tears came to me.

"Don't cry," said the child.

As it spoke, I heard the leaves behind me move, and turning, saw a woman looking at us from a distance. Her face was transfixed with terror. Then, as quickly as it had come, happiness left me, and again my heart was bound. I put the child down on the ground—I did not take her to the woman, for I knew now all men feared me, and so understood her look of terror. The child began to cry, and put out its hands to me, but I walked away and left it there.

This chance meeting with the child had great effect on me. I became conscious of what I had lost. I had lost my part in nature. My old happiness as a beast of instinct was happiness arising from being then part of nature, involved in nature. Conscious or unconscious, I had been in full sympathy with nature — its glories, its changes, growth, and decay: the freshness of morning, the calm of evening, I had shared in as a sinless part. And what had

I gained ? Conscious knowledge of man, intellect perhaps to strive with him, power perchance to strengthen man's hold on the material.

As we sat at breakfast I upbraided Power with what he had done. My sense of gratitude was gone. I began to fear, not gloat over, my future.

We had just risen from the table, when there was a sound of many voices outside the house. We moved to the window, and saw beyond a rough crowd of men and women. They were armed with rude weapons, and as they saw us an inarticulate roar of rage uprose. Power opened the window, and we stood forth. Instantly I saw that the anger of these people was against myself, not Power. Their frantic gestures of rage were directed at me. On the outskirts was a woman holding in her arms the child I had seen after my bath. I asked Power what moved them.

"They say you are a devil, and have the evil eye," said he. "Did you see that child this morning ?"

I told him what had occurred, while the people still roared abuse.

"I must calm these beasts," said he ;
"there is only one way."

He spoke a few words in Italian, and the noise subsided a little. Then he went indoors, and quickly returned with a bag of money. The woman and child were passed forward to him, and he put a few gold-pieces in the woman's hand. There was some little applause from the people, who seemed quieter. Then after a few more words he threw, piece by piece, the other money with him indiscriminately here and there amongst them. In a moment the raging crowd was turned to good temper : scrambling, pushing, hustling, always with hearty laughter, they pressed in hot haste towards the spot where money fell, and he who was successful held up above his head the prize, shouting in triumph. The money gone, they all trooped off chattering gaily, only a man here and there turning to point his hand and curse at me.

"You see what men are," said Power as they went.

CHAPTER III.

WE stayed in Italy but a short time longer, Power growing day by day more dull and listless, and I sadder as I more fully realised what I had lost and how little I had gained. The meanness of man in waste of opportunity forced itself more and more on my imagination, and hatred for the human beast grew, centring itself on Power. I had lost all sense of gratitude towards him, and felt rising in me longing for revenge. It was he who had ruined me, he who had torn me from nature and reduced me to the level of man. One result of this change of feeling in me was curious. As my contempt for man advanced, the relative position of myself and Power altered. Gradually, almost imperceptibly, our position changed, till at

last I knew I was his master. I spoke of this to him, and with a weary, hopeless smile he admitted it.

"Destruction must be where there is creation," said he.

At the time I knew not what he meant. I knew afterwards.

It was at my suggestion we went to London on leaving Italy. It was May, and the season. I had seen the life of the masses—I wished to see the life of the best people. We had great wealth; and that, Power said, was all wanted for ordinary association with good society.

We arrived in London on, I think, a Saturday, and Power took me to the Opera. It was the first time I had seen a large number of picked human beings together. The diverse colours of the crowd pleased me, as did the many beautiful women I saw. At first I feared to be rude if staring at others; but when I found very many females painted, I knew they must probably all like open admiration. I was glad, too, most of the women assumed a form of

dress which enabled me to admire more than their faces. One peculiarity I noticed in this crowd of human beings strangely akin to a like peculiarity in a crowd of monkeys. They were all more or less silent till the music began, when they all commenced chattering,—just as monkeys begin chattering when the silence of the forest is broken by the singing of birds. Why, however, these people paid so much money simply to talk, as they might have done at home, I could not understand, nor could Power tell me.

In taking me to a public place, Power had not anticipated any objection from men to my appearance, but had even thought it might please them, they having little diversity in amusement, and always showing a strange delight in the abnormal. I, too, had read of many instances of this peculiarity, and so shared his expectations. But we had not been seated long before a very pretty singer ran on to the stage, and after bowing to the people, who were clapping their hands, looked at me and

made a grimace. Soon after this all the human beings began hissing like geese—the human manner of showing displeasure. It appeared they wanted me to go away. And soon after, an orange was thrown, and struck me on the shirt. This hurt my pride, and so made me angry. But Power ordered a man I took by the arm to wipe the marks off, and we left the house. The orange, Power told me, must have been brought there from outside, because the cheapest places at the Opera cost five shillings, and those who can afford to pay so much only eat oranges in private. I think it was natural I should be angry when the orange was thrown at me. It spoiled my shirt. But there anger should have stayed. It did not: I was catching some of man's meanness. It was quite in accordance with the nature of the foolish beasts that they should consider themselves my superior,—just as a tradesman who has made millions by boiling soap thinks himself superior to his poorer fellows, an emascuate brainless peer thinks himself above

others because of his ancestors' position, or a sempstress—declared mad—thinks herself empress of the world. I should, in reason, have been amused, not angered, at this silly littleness. But, in fact, I was angry, very angry, like a common man.

I told Power of this, and he suggested that I should revenge myself by becoming for a season their leader. He said, if I would feed and entertain these creatures better than any one else could, I should be the most popular and most sought-after animal in London; and that by so doing I should have an opportunity of seeing all forming the best society—that is, the most gentlemanlike and ladylike human beings in London.

Low as my estimate of men was, Power's statement struck me as too foolish to be true. But a short time proved he was right. We purchased and furnished magnificently one of the finest houses in London, and fed and entertained—without any demand of payment—twice a-week. Soon all society was open to us for choice of

guests,—we refused admission to a rich American,—and not even noblemen whose grandfathers were tradesmen, and who used coats of arms a thousand years old, were allowed to bring their friends without first submitting their names.

This experiment confirmed my contempt for and hatred against men. Some I found used society as a lever, some for power, some for marriage, many for distraction. Only the few, the very few, sought and found reasonable relaxation after reasonable work. Power grew daily more dull and listless, till he seemed sunk in hopeless indifference. And yet my hatred against him grew, as almost hourly I found our life more intolerable. But what hope of change had I?

We determined to leave London, but we were delayed for a time: the delay was caused by me.

Perhaps, of the few who really enjoyed society, those most happy were the young girls out for their first season. And of these one especially struck me, a Miss Kitty Champernowne. My sad fall to

man's estate had put beyond reach for me all question of love, and it is a fact that I never felt more than a passing titillation of vulgar passion, for which the form of women's dress was in fault. But, human as I was, I could still feel pure pleasure in watching a girl's innocent, instinctive, not intellectual, delight in the stir and movement of a brightly dressed crowd and the admiration her fresh beauty called forth.

We had furnished our rooms to admit more generally than is usual of *tête-à-tête* conversation, and one evening, hidden in a mass of greenery, I heard two people conversing together, as they thought, unheard. So far removed from, so much above, the ordinary littleness of mankind, I always held myself justified in listening when and where I chose. One speaker was a Lord Dase, the other a Mrs Castlemaine.

"It was at Lady Champernowne's," were the first words I heard from Lord Dase; "we were abusing Power's Beast,"—the name, I knew, used for me behind my back.

"Very vulgar," said Mrs Castlemaine.

"Very, but we all do it. Suddenly Kitty Champernowne, with tears in her eyes, and trembling, broke out: she gave it us as hot as you like—said it was caddish to take advantage of the Beast and then abuse him. It was splendid."

"And you incontinently fell in love? Miss Ada Kerne?"

Lord Dase laughed. "She was there: we were all silent, felt whipped, but she took Kitty from the room."

"And what is to be the end?"

"I marry that girl if I can." He spoke hardly.

I went away when I had heard this. It moved me greatly. Except when I had met the little child in Italy, I had felt no touch of nature from any human being till now. Gratitude rose in me again, gratitude to this pure young girl, and I cried half in happiness, half with a painful stinging at the heart, as I had cried when I met the child.

Some days after, a Mr Machiavelli Colin Clout came in. It was late: Power and

I met him at the door as we came back from the Opera. He was an old Cambridge friend of Power's. As we sat at supper he told us he had been at Lady Champernowne's that afternoon,—that Lord Dase was engaged to Miss Champernowne at her mother's bidding, the girl loving a painter, a Mr Flamwell. I knew this Mr Flamwell—he was painting my portrait; and Mr Colin Clout told us Ada Kerne—an actress I had seen, and whom Power knew well—was present, and had declared Lord Dase was engaged to her, and should die if he did not marry her.

Now I cared nothing in general for what the beasts, men, might do. But on learning this girl was to be married against her will, strong rage consumed me. I could not control myself, I could not understand myself; and my rage was not less when Colin Clout told us Lord Dase was a scoundrel—a man, too, who used his position and money to seduce women. I was so maddened I told Power the man must die.

I have said Power was falling daily into

a more dull and listless state. It is only now, as I look back, that I know how strange was his manner of receiving my words that Lord Dase must die. He seemed verily pleased. I heard him mutter, "A cumberer of the earth: perhaps a sacrifice."

When we were alone I became calmer outwardly. But I was fixed in my resolve the man must die. To take life deliberately seemed to me then, seems to me now, a horrible act. Nothing to me shows more strongly the curse of intellect than the fact that in every country vast herds of men are trained to killing as a profession, and that these men are not only honoured, but form the really best class. In spite of my dislike to causing death, I found the resolve fixed in me that Lord Dase must die.

Power and I discussed the means. He took a curious interest in the affair,—I had not seen him so bright for a long time. I left all details to him.

There was then in London a quiet resort

for opium, kept by one Li Chung, which Power had known in his Cambridge days, and which he still sometimes visited. This man, Li Chung, came to the house next morning,—I must hurry over this part of what I write. It hurts me. I did good, great good, by carrying out the death, but reviewing what led to it hurts me. This man, Li Chung, came to the house the next morning, a man with a face as of sun-darkened wood, wrinkled with a thousand wrinkles, the eyes black, humorous, and cruel. He cared not for life or death, —cared not, as it turned out, even for his own life. Power agreed to give him £2500 if Lord Dase died; £5000 to any one he named if he, Li Chung, also met his death. Power decoyed Lord Dase to Li Chung's by a letter from Ada Kerne. She was a devil in hate. Eight or nine days after, Power took me late at night to Li Chung's. We waited till all were gone, then through a crack we looked through into one of the little curtained chambers. Lord Dase lay there, his eyes open.

"He stay so, long as I like," said Li Chung; "good medicine, know no one, see no one. Me feed, police come, he very ill, just come. When drown?"

"Thursday," said Power.

I was nervous and sick when we got back. But the man had to die. On the Thursday, just before daylight, Power walked into my room: I saw that he was still asleep. "Dead, dead!" said he, and the hopelessness of his voice struck cold to my heart. "Dead, and no sacrifice." He walked away as quietly as he had come. On that day Lord Dase's dead body was found in the Thames. It was recently drowned: there seemed no suspicion against Li Chung. But in a day or two he wrote to Power that he should die on the morrow, and the £5000 must be given to his daughter. His voluntary death, his trust in Power, seemed strange. The £5000 was paid.

And all this time my detestation of our life in London grew, and with it my hatred Power. At first I reasoned why I hated

him. But soon I reasoned not at all, so overpowering grew hatred. How intense had grown my contempt for and hatred of men, how closely this hatred centred round Power, was shown three days after the discovery of Lord Dase's body. Some of the daily papers had stupidly hinted suspicion of the murder against Power and myself, so that our reception on the following Monday was besieged by a crowd. Every one who had even a shadow of right to come, came,—the opportunity of eating the food, drinking the wine, of perchance exchanging a few words with possible murderers, was to them irresistible. When the crush was at its greatest, feeling overcame me. The languid flow of life, the vapid words, filled me with sickening disgust. A *bizarre* idea came to me, seized my imagination. Every room was blazing with many lights. The idea was simple for fulfilment. Unseen, unsuspected, I set a light to some inflammable drapery. Soon the room, soon the house, was blazing with fire. It was glorious to see the terror of the beasts as headlong they

rushed away, their gorgeous dresses torn and streaming, their painted faces dabbled with white fear, only here and there the calm, fearless face of a man or woman emphasising the general frenzy of cowardice. I walked outside, and looked on happily, but with a beating heart, at the wild scene.

Suddenly I heard a voice say to me, "Where is Power?"

Till then I had not thought of him—I was filled with general hatred of his kind; but as I heard the man speak, I saw at an upper window the figure of Power himself. In the changeful light he stood dim and undefined. But it was he; and as I saw him, hatred again centred on the man. He was mine,—he must die by my hand, not by accident; he must not escape me. Some men near by were placing a fire-escape. I hurried their movements. The moment it was in place I rushed up. And the strange human beasts cheered me. I reached Power. My heart dilated when I saw he feared to see me. Yes; he had meant to evade me by death. But what is

degenerate man to a monkey? With my greater strength I seized him, and, the beasts below more loudly cheering, brought him in safety to the ground.

We remained in London but four days after the fire. Moved by human weakness, I wanted to complete what I had partly done by causing Lord Dase's death. Miss Champernowne had run away and married the painter. We hired a private hotel, and gave four great receptions, and I established Flamwell's reputation as a painter. How? Because he was an artist of genius? How is reputation established amongst human beasts while the man is alive? Schubert? Berlioz? Vandyke? Of your established reputations of any time how many are of charlatans? Perhaps he was a man of genius. I know not and care not. His reputation—to make money—I established.

It was but an hour before we left for the train. A lady came in, dressed very quietly; a face beautiful, not with the soft, equal beauty of youth, for that was past, but so calm in aspect, so kindly and sympathetic

in regard, that almost happy peace fell on me as I looked at her. Now and again, for the most part in the faces of priests, have I seen this almost godlike expression.

As she seated herself Power looked at me.

With a gesture I refused to go. Power smiled wearily. The woman but slightly bowed her head, and a little colour showed in her face.

"You are leaving London?" said she. Her voice was very low and soft, and bore entreaty.

"We leave for Starr in an hour."

"For Starr in Monmouthshire?"

"Yes."

"Strange, how strange!" murmured she to herself, but she smiled as pleased.

We sat there for a long time in silence, the woman with her eyes on the ground as in prayer, Power's eyes fixed on her face with an inscrutable expression.

At last she spoke, very quietly, but as with an intense undercurrent of entreaty.

"I heard you were going, and I could not help coming to speak to you myself. For

the sake of the great God in heaven, change your life! What have you done with the gifts given you? Must you not render an account at the last? With your wealth and intellect, think what might have been, what *may* be!"

Power, as she spoke, kept his eyes on her with the same inscrutable expression in them.

"Too late, too late!" he muttered.

The woman rose up and came to him, and knelt down before him. I think, so earnest was she, she had forgotten my presence. And, after all, I was but a monkey.

"I love you still:" her voice was so low it came to me but as a whisper. "Long ago you made a great sacrifice for me. Yes, I know, a great sacrifice. God will not forget. By my love I entreat you."

As she spoke I was torn asunder in thought and feeling: Power was mine, his life was mine, nothing must balk my revenge. But the woman's entreaty moved me painfully; a doubt came to me that I might give up my rightful prey. I put the doubt from me.

How long she remained on her knees before Power I know not. It seemed a long, long time. It cannot have been long in fact.

"It is too late," said Power at last. "I cannot tell you all—I would not if I could. I feel now I love you still——"

"Thank God!"

"But it is too late, too late!"

Then she rose and walked to the door: there she paused for a moment.

"Never forget our love," said she.

"Never," said Power, and she was gone.

CHAPTER IV.

VANITAS VANITATIS.

WE left London quietly, and took a house near a town called Starr. Here we should both, rightly,—in default of following the example of our guests, and bathing away our ills in Germany,—have taken hard physical exercise and lived abstemiously. But my interest in life was gone. And Power was in a like state. We wearily dreamt and ate the time away.

And the new, horrible dread, the dread of the future, grew on me. I feared, with my change of being, I had not only lost my former place in God's nature, but had now a man's soul. I looked on futurity with increasing terror. I saw how man suffered in this life under the curse of intellect, and

I saw how clearly he was conditioned by material circumstance. But still he had free will; he was responsible for his form of life; it must be held in great measure his own choice. Some awful retribution most surely awaited him in the future.

And daily I felt more keenly that I must share the punishment.

With this dread increased, if possible, my hatred of man,—contempt was already complete. Day by day it grew, with the growth of fear. And day by day my hatred centred more closely on Power.

It was in September that Power first spoke to me directly of my state.

“You must write,” said he, “and write soon. If you lead this life much longer, you will lose all hold of intellect; and you can never return to your former state. You will become meaner than a sane man,—a lunatic.”

My feeling of hatred against him had by this time grown so strong I could with difficulty contain myself in his presence. I longed so earnestly to kill him.

"Write," said he; "you will find relief in the labour. Write of man; put down on record what you think of him and his works,—or would you rather tell me in detail?"

"I cannot tell you," said I.

"Then write," said he, "and write the truth. You have no object, as man has, in lying; you have no prejudices to fight against. Write."

The suggestion was pleasant to me. It grew more pleasant on reflection, and I wrote—wrote all that appears above and all that follows.

CHAPTER V.

SOLVING THE LESSER DIFFICULTY BY THE
CREATION OF A GREATER.

IN writing of man, I feel that I have not entirely lost my old nature,—I am not altogether a human beast in intellect. For if I have lost the past happy sense of unity with nature, I have never lost the present idea of its possibility. And it is individuality, the sense of separation in being from nature, which marks man as a distinct animal from all others.

I think, too, if I had been wholly man, I could never have felt so strongly as I do the fact that intellect is lower than instinct.

I say intellect is a cursed gift—a gift flowing from evil, destroying natural instinc-

tive happiness, and introducing unnatural misery and unnatural immorality.

Man is the lowest and meanest of all the beasts: he fell from his original state of purity when reason was his, when Adam and Eve first ate the apple in Paradise and knew that they were naked.

All the evils, all the crimes and infinite miseries of man, arise from reason. Of all these evils, is there even one to which the beast of instinct is subject? What does man's discipline of himself prove? All religions teach him the subjection of his nature: what religion is wanted for such subjection of other beasts? All education of the young is but the imbuing them with power to restrain natural inclinations. Other creatures neither have nor need any such education. Human laws for the punishment of criminals exist, and are necessary for example to others, to enforce right dealing and moral conduct. Nature itself is the one and only law for other creatures.

How many men are happy? Are the few who govern, who have time for reflection?

Are the many who toil? How many other living things are unhappy, unless subject to man?

The boast of man, that by his reason he is the king of all beasts, is empty and false. His life is mean and ignoble by comparison with that of others, though conquest of the material may have given him physical command. The very idea of the elephant leading so unnatural a life that he must, as does the lordly man, renovate his enfeebled body and eradicate gout or rheumatism by much mineral-water drinking is absurd: 'Arry in Epping Forest stands in no manner of comparison with the lion in his native home, nor the working bee with the woman prostitute; fleas and bugs are not so mean as human parasites; while thieves, liars, murderers for money, torturers for salvation, are found only amongst men. Even man's latest example of a great philosopher, unhealthy in body, querulous and repining in mind, is less enviable, less worthy of imitation, than that of a cow peacefully and contentedly chewing the cud.

What soundness, when dissected, has man's boast? It is so flimsy, so immaterial a thing, that it is incapable of dissection. Surely any peacock is as beautiful, as admirably clothed, as reasonable in expression as even Beau Brummell, the goat as continent as King Charles II., the tiger as merciful as a Red Indian, the sloth as virtuous as the gouty man.

Is there one man who can say, "I have lived a life as pure before God as that of a monkey?"

And in higher things, what basis has man for his conceit and pride?

Can it be imagined that any other created being could have the evilly arrogant, blind conceit of man?—such arrogant, blind conceit as to claim for himself *alone* the possession of a soul, because his inborn wickedness is so supreme that a supreme sacrifice from above has been necessary to save him from everlasting torment?

And does reason justify itself when judged by reason?

There can be no true accusation made

against any created being, but man, of deliberate wickedness: the question of unhappiness is one affecting man alone—he alone as a reasonable being is responsible. By the very definition of instinct every creature under its government lives, normally, in the best possible agreement with circumstance; any such creature can be as little guilty of wickedness in any act as the earth itself. How accuse the earth of wickedness because of the evil wrought by an earthquake? And so, for happiness, each creature of instinct attains the exact degree of happiness which is consonant with its surroundings. And all these creatures, unlike man, have some measure of happiness. With man alone comes misery. Happy in unconscious childhood, his measure of happiness decreases with the development of his reason; and as for the man, so for his race: as through ages the reason of the race advances, so through ages happiness retreats: each new discovery in science, each fresh conquest over the material, drives the majority of human beings to dirtier and closer packing in towns, to more hopeless and

wretched labour under keener competition for existence ; each century of advance in intellect is marked by the imposition of new restrictive laws against new forms of crime and dishonesty committed by men under the development of mind.

What has man gained by reason ? Misery of the many, mean material happiness of the few ; blindness of heart, pride, vainglory, and hypocrisy, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. Surely his race must be guilty of some terrible original sin that such a curse should have fallen on him ; or how appalling in its wickedness must be his nature to have turned this possible blessing of intellect to so terrible a curse ?

One of the strangest freaks of man is the manner of consideration he brings to bear on evil. All men admit the evil of their lot ; many have tried to work out its origin and to discover some necessity for it ; a few, because of the presence of evil, have questioned the beneficence of the Creator. But all assume ignorance that human reason, even the existence of man himself, is based

on, is developed from evil. Had there been no evil in the world, the beast, man, could never have been evolved. His reason has been developed under strife between man and man,—not the inexorable strife of nature, but competition deliberately set up by man using intellect. Had there been no such human strife, there could have been no such advance; man must always have remained what he originally was, a happy beast of instinct. And this human strife is, constitutes, evil. The moment man came under the government of reason, each human being—except the lucky few content with their condition—reasoned that it was for his individual benefit he should lie, cheat, murder, and thief for self-advancement. But, lest opportunity for gain by such means should be lost, he appreciated, too, the fact that he should act as covertly as possible. Hence it followed that each man consented to promulgate for others a moral code of truth, fair dealing, and honesty, as thereby he made opportunity for remunerative selfish conduct and dis-

guised his own mainsprings of action. And thus arose the ever-existing conflict between the enacted laws of communities and each individual's reasonable conduct. Dishonest men concurred in making honest laws, each recognising that while it was for his own benefit he should be latently dishonest, it was equally for his own benefit others should be honest.

The wildest arguments I found in human writing in proof of the honesty, the magnanimity, of men, are those based on the recorded honest, magnanimous lives of certain human beings. In the first place, as a white crow, a white elephant—even a mad monkey—is occasionally seen, so also must there be the *lusus naturæ* amongst men. Again, when men have for so long promulgated a fairly moral code, it is but natural some should have fallen into the trap and blindly sacrificed self-interest. But, in truth, the fair conclusion from these records is against man. No one denies that the acts of a monster like Nero have come down so clearly recorded because they were excep-

tional, even for a man. In the same way, it is only when particular acts in the human recreation of wife-beating or child-torture are exceptionally interesting from exceptional brutality, that they are recorded minutely. And yet it would seem to have struck no man that the records of monsters of goodness are recorded so minutely because their acts are exceptional. But the fact must be so. Had it been a natural thing for any Roman to die for his country, we should never have heard of Quintus Curtius—certainly the same glory would not have surrounded his act; had Greeks been ordinarily just, Aristides' peculiarity would have passed unnoticed; were nations in the habit of keeping faith one with another, Sparta would not have bestowed such exceptional honour on Thebes. The rapture from poets, the praise from historians, the very laudations from daily newspapers, that acts of bravery, patriotism, justice, generosity call forth, can only be explained by the exceptional nature of such acts.

And even if man is to be judged from

recorded acts, how stands the account? Even when remembering that human communities in self-glorification shout to the boundaries of the earth individual acts of magnanimity, while the leper conceals his leprosy, the wife her dishonour, the soldier his faint heart, and the criminal his crime, how stands the account? How many acts of how many monsters of cruel hard-heartedness are known against Howard's philanthropy?—the acts of one man against the acts of all other men under their constituted Governments? How many breaches of faith by States against Thebes' one act of good faith? Even in the present day there is no reasonable statesman who would for one moment rely implicitly on the observance of any the most solemn treaty.

Note.—"How honourable it is for a prince to keep his word and act rather with integrity than collusion, I suppose everybody understands: nevertheless, experience has shown in our times that those princes who have not pinned themselves up to that punctuality and preciseness have done great things, and by their cunning

and subtilty not only circumvented, and darted the brains of those with whom they had to deal, but have overcome and been too hard for those who have been so superstitiously exact."—The Prince?

How many betrayals of country against Quintus Curtius' sacrifice? History bristles with them; Pitt, Marlborough, Clive, Hastings, the Napoleons—scarcely a statesman or warrior but his recorded life gives examples: nations have been made and destroyed as much by these betrayals as by war.

And of those acts of heroism on which humanity prides itself, in how many has not instinct alone a part? In how many has the glorified act resulted from timely loss of reasoning power and timely resuscitation of instinctive action? The abnormal heroism of the mother in defence of her child, the disciplined death of the soldier, the personal sacrifice of a gentleman to save his honour, are all cases of instinct. And herein other beasts at least equal men.

When, before going amongst men, I studied

the principles of reason, I recognised its narrow limits. But, learning at the same time what power its exercise had given man over the material, I almost worshipped the beast, and formed strange ideas of how complete his happiness must be. I say "strange" ideas, because I afterwards found them to be false, and impossible for man as he exists and thinks. I learnt that man, by the exercise of reason, was capable of so cultivating the ground, and so feeding other animals, that all human beings might have a sufficiency and even choice of food; that by the exercise of this same reason all might be housed in palaces, all might cultivate the mind in the pursuit of art and science. And all this might be man's in return for reasonable bodily and mental labour, which, by the nature of all beasts, would give bodily and mental health and happiness.

My astonishment was profound when I discovered the state of man to be absolutely different from that which it must have been by the ordinary exercise of reason. I found the few absolutely suffering in body from the

disuse of their muscles, and in mind from disuse or unreasonable use of the brain. Not one of the few was engaged in remunerative bodily labour, and but a small minority used the brain in intellectual pursuits. The many were in so hopeless a state of bodily labour, that they had not even time to wash or aspirate aitches.

I considered where the fault could lie. In reason? Reason, limited as it was, could not be in fault. It must be true within its limits. In man? Man without reason was probably as pure and happy an animal as a monkey. It seems certain, then, that this evil state was the result of man's endowment with reason. As heat may result from the mixture of two cold liquids, so evil seemed evolved from contact of man with reason. Intellect in man was the curse.

I determined to compare instinct with reason, and to consider the leading characteristics of man. But after consideration, I changed my mind. The spiritual part of man's nature I could not deal with. At one time, indeed, I doubted that he had any

spiritual nature. But on reflection it seemed to me something of spiritual must be latent in him from the fact that he is so grossly cursed in distinction to all other animals. The fact that he has required revelation from above, though proving he is the meanest and most wicked of all the beasts, does not, I think, prove he is absolutely material. It is rather to me a proof of the contrary. For though, in spite of revelation, man remains utterly contemptible, it must still be assumed revelation has something to work on—otherwise it would be objectless, which is incredible.

Turning to the action of intellect in man, his conquest of the material appeared unworthy of any consideration. That simply showed knowledge by which he so changed the form of matter that natural force revealed itself in ways new to men. The real question then seemed reduced to his moral nature, and therein his degree of happiness. And this depended on his use of reason.

Why is he so unhappy a beast? Necessarily from some misuse of intellect, probably

from wrong principles of conduct and action laid down for man.

So, on consideration, I confined my attention to the questions of Physical Health, Competition, Pride, and Charity; and I determined to treat them separately, hoping to find wherein the curse lay.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

I WAS happy while writing, happy and absorbed. I did not think of readers. The pleasure must have come from the mere recording of ideas,—from consciousness of giving a material fixity to something born of myself, and which would otherwise have died at birth. Every expression of contempt for man, every justification of anger, each argument for instinct against intellect, filled me in writing with delight.

Now that the end is near, and some part of my old pure nature seems restored, I know that in writing I have been as blind in self-criticism and criticism of my work, as

arrogant and blandly conceited, as any man. But let all stand. The end is near.

When I had completed the last chapter on happiness, a longing seized me that what I had written might be published, and so, on my death, some record remain of the human episode of my life. I told Power of this, and he said it should be done. He wrote to Colin Clout, the man whom I had seen in London, and a few days after he came.

I had had two large rooms thrown into one, and fitted as a glade in a forest. There was entry left in but one direction, which Power or myself from inside could close, so that from the room beyond none could enter, though through the trunks of trees the interior could be seen. It was late in the afternoon when Colin Clout, alone, came. He was a man of what English human beasts term gentlemanlike manner; insolent with insolence offensive as arising from contempt of others, not insolence amusing as from belief in personal superiority. Power and I were seated in the glade-room when

Colin Clout came. He shivered as he entered.

"What made you choose such an awful place to live in?" said he to Power. "Have you ghosts or devils for tenants of your grounds? As I entered your gates the trees and grass, the very gravel, breathed melancholy; and here, in your *bizarre* room, one might think we three the only living beings in a lost world. What do you want?"

"My friend wants something he has written published," said Power.

"Why can't you do it? Why summon me from Italy?"

"Enough," said Power, almost sternly; "I cannot. Will you do it?"

Colin Clout looked at him, as puzzled. "Who wrote it?" asked he.

"I told you."

"Forgive me," said Clout, with an insolently indifferent look at me; "I fear I must ask for proof."

I went out, brought back what I had written, and writing a few sentences from

Zola and Swift there in the man's presence, showed him the two for comparison.

"I am satisfied," said he, after a cursory glance. And I saw in his face an expression touching surprise. "It shall be published," said he. "When shall I take it?"

Power looked at me. I said it should be finished on the morrow.

"You will sleep here?" said Power.

"I must," replied Clout. "It is raining; my portmanteau is here. But the place oppresses me—I am stifling."

I had taken every day a walk of ten or fifteen miles while writing. Power most of the day—as I before—wandered listlessly about the grounds. Each day I had started later and later, that I might be less likely to meet people, for each day those I met showed greater repulsion to me. The last two days the few I met had murmured as I passed, and even, from a wary distance, thrown things at me. The foolish beasts undoubtedly looked on me as something devilishly inhuman. And, indeed, coming

from our melancholy, hopeless home, I may have taken with me an atmosphere of dread.

It was dark as I left Power and his friend and went out. I walked on for some time, unheeding where I went. All at once I found myself in a crowd of rough men, and, as I made to continue my course, they barred the way. They showed fear, but, in spite, determination to stop me. Suddenly I noticed their demeanour change, and through their midst, walking to me quietly, appeared the woman in grey who had come to our house in London just before we left. But now her aspect was not soft; her expression was stern, and her voice as she spoke hard.

"Come with me," she said. I followed her, and the crowd, in perfect silence, fell back before us. We went on without speaking for some distance. None followed.

"I know not what you are," said she at last, standing still. No one was near. "It is not for me to judge,—judgment is with

God. But I know this," and her voice rose very clear and distinct, — "I know you cannot injure Reuben Power. You cannot. Love stands before you; love shall save him. Go."

CHAPTER VII.

TO SLEEP,—PERCHANCE TO DREAM.

BEFORE I met the woman I knew the end was near. It had been fixed that what I had written should be published, and nothing stood between me and Power's death. The meeting with the woman cleared the way and brought close the end. She enraged me. I was humiliated that she had saved me from bodily harm, and her words, that I could not injure Power, raised my anger against him to fever height. He must die at once. But first I must speak with him.

When I returned he was still in the glade-room. He sat there, with his head in his hands, staring in a lost, dazed way

at the fire. He scarcely moved as I entered.

"The end is near," said I.

He but looked at me, with a weary smile.

"Listen," I went on. "I must revenge myself; it is you who have ruined me. I was happy—a creature of instinct, a part of nature, unconscious of sin, and so unsoiled by sin. You called forth, almost created, intellect in me. You gave me reason, you made me know my responsibility to a higher power. My God! Most awful of all! you may have drawn a soul into me—a soul to suffer in the future."

He looked at me in sheer astonishment. "And do you fear possession of a soul?"

"Fear!" I cried; "I stand in horror, deadly horror of it! How can I, one of such millions of cruel, selfish, unhealthy monsters, hope for salvation? Hell, if a soul is mine, is too good for me!"

He sighed, astonishment still in his face. "And I," said he, "fear with deadly fear, but what? The loss of my soul. A long

time I have been oppressed by the feeling my soul has gone into you. Nothing, absolute nothingness, is before me. I would pray even for hell. There is no hope but in——”

“You lie!” said I. “There is no hope in love. Revenge must be mine—it is justly mine; I will not be robbed of your future.”

“When?” said he, at last.

I hesitated. I longed at that time for his death—to take him quietly by the throat and watch him die; die slowly before me, with no spilling of red blood to offend me. But I hesitated; I wanted to record in writing all possible before the end.

“To-morrow morning,” I said.

I went back to my room and wrote, wrote all above written, all I now write. A great peace had fallen on me after I had fixed the time of Power's death.

As I now write I see more clearly how subjective my life has been, how made by circumstance. All I have written is before me, and I see, true as is the miserable state of the human beast, I have myself written

from no truly independent standpoint. I have failed to accomplish what Power wished, expected from me. I am a monkey, and my clothing of hair, though from God, determines my judgment of all existence as certainly as the robes of a duke from Stultz, the rags of a beggar from the gutter, even as surely as the liver of a philosopher, determine their views of life and their fellows. No creature of God can see, can write truth: whatever the standpoint, the outlook is distorted and falsified by the glamour and deception of social circumstance.

Death is near me: my life, I know, stands involved in that of Power. But I have no fear. I am on the brink of a great mystery, and dread of the future is swallowed up in overpowering wonder. My heart even trembles with new-born hope. Perchance I have no soul. Then, O mighty nature! conscious or unconscious, thou wilt again absorb me! Perchance I have a human soul. Then, Great Power above! have mercy on me! I hope.

The house I sit in is mere bricks and mortar, all of material that I own is passing away, my very reason seems but a grain of sand in God's vast nature. In thought I am back again under the green leaves of my youth, and the sun shines and warms and invigorates me, sinless, happy, and strong. O Mother Nature, be kind to me! God! if I am of Thee, be merciful!

Power must die; but I hope.

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PART III.

WRITTEN BY MACHIAVELLI COLIN CLOUT

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CHAPTER I.

I WAS at San Remo in the autumn of 1890, and had not been there a week when I received a letter from Power asking me to come at once and see him at Starr. He wrote that I must come. I felt inclined at first to refuse, but, too lazy to reply, started at once. It was a bore, but still something to do. And Power was always interesting.

Starr stands high above the Wye, bounded towards the river by a broken precipice of some two hundred feet: a quarter of a mile from the town the ground slopes down to a steep wooded valley; and here, in a large house, surrounded by some hundred acres of gloomy, park-like ground, was Power living.

I arrived about six in the evening, walk-

ing from the station. I am not nervous, but the solitary way through the grounds up to the house was extremely disagreeable. The place oppressed me with melancholy. In the dim light the shadows seemed to change and move as alive with sad heavy life.

I found Power and his Beast in a room peculiarly but most beautifully furnished. It resembled, closely resembled, a grassy break in a thick forest, a tiny glade shut in closely by trees. The carpet was made to imitate grass, and near the centre was a wood-fire, the smoke passing up through an exit unseen in the canopy of green above. Facing this fire sat Power and his Beast.

Knowing Power's peculiarity, I first shook hands with his Beast, who rose and bowed slightly—a well-mannered Beast certainly. I then turned to Power. There was the same sad, hopeless expression on his face, but he had grown much thinner, and in his eyes was a hunted look. The room was well lighted, but the atmosphere of melancholy was as heavy as outside. I felt sorry I had come. As Power would not speak, I

asked him why he had called me. He said his Beast had written something that he wanted published.

“Why not publish yourself?” said I.

Power seemed unreasonably angry at the question. “I have no time,” said he.

I must have expressed some doubt when told a monkey had written a book, for the Beast rose, left the room, and quickly returned with a bundle of manuscript and a pen. Making a gesture to call my attention, he wrote rapidly half-a-dozen paragraphs, and gave the written paper to me. Some were from a late novel of a most popular French author of the day. Fear of the Lord Chamberlain prevents me from giving them in full, but they are well known to every well-read woman of fashion. Some were from ‘Gulliver’s Travels,’ in which that traveller expresses his opinion of men. The writing was the same neat handwriting of the manuscript.

I bowed in acceptance of the proof. The Beast, as I bowed, walked quietly from the room.

"I want you," said Power, "to see this manuscript published. It is purely a matter of business,"—he handed me a considerable sum of money in notes,—"I am bound to provide that it should be done."

"Why not do it yourself?"

"I do not feel inclined. And perhaps I may not have the time."

"If it is accepted, what shall I do with the money?"

"It will not be accepted. Certainly not as it stands. It is crude and uninteresting, and too open to hostile criticism. But I want it published, if possible, as it stands, at your expense. Will you do this for me?"

I assented.

"If possible, as it stands, with no alterations, no additions?"

I promised. Then a grotesque thought struck me.

"What a strange thing, Power," said I, "you should believe me when I simply say I will do what you want! You and I believe in nothing, not even in our-

selves. But you know I still find pleasure in the world, and this money would be useful to me."

"Yes, it is strange," replied he, almost smiling.

After a pause I said, at a foolish venture—

"He must be very fond of you, Power?"

"He hates me," replied he, as stating a bare uninteresting fact; "I feel it is only a question of days when he kills me. Personally I think the time is near. That is why I have called you."

"Most unreasonable," said I, again at a foolish venture. In truth, Power's cold humanless voice and the surroundings of the place were more and more affecting me, and I was almost losing my self-possession.

"I am not sure of that," replied Power, assuming my words referred to the Beast's hate: "from his point of view he has reason to hate me. Belief in God seems instinctive in him. He has formed an opinion that by the awakening of his intellect he has lost—but no matter for that. You will learn all

you need know from the manuscript. He hates me."

"Then why don't you go away?"

"I don't know," said he, looking at me strangely—"I do not know. I have thought of going. But we seem bound together. I feel shackled to him. I cannot go. And," he went on wearily, "it is not worth the trouble. I have nothing left to live for."

We sat in silence for some time, looking at the fire. There was no other light in the room.

At last, as with an effort, he said—

"Do you know where your sister is?"

I replied that I did not.

"I saw her a few days ago," said he.

"Where?"

"Passing here."

I asked him if they had spoken together. He hesitated for a moment, and then said wearily—

"It does not matter. You would not be interested."

He put his head down on his hands, and I

heard him murmur to himself, "Too late ! too late !"

I fell into a long unhappy reverie. The place breathed of unhappiness. Power himself seemed absorbed in melancholy.

When I again came to myself, the fire had burnt low, there was barely light to see. I felt nervous, painfully nervous. My companionship burdened me as inhuman. I experienced a ghastly oppression of repulsion towards Power and his Beast. I might with equal comfort have been sitting with an embodied ghoul. I heard the rain outside pouring down monotonously.

"I can stand this no longer," said I, rising ; "I must go, Power."

"Walk straight forward, and you will come to a door," said he ; "turn to the left, and you will find all prepared for you."

I went out as he told me, leaving him sitting motionless over the dying fire, the only sound that of the outside rain.

Turning to the left as directed, I had not gone far when the cheerful voice of a manservant fell on my ear. The relief was very

great. He led me to a brightly lighted room where dinner was laid out for me, and, passing through this room, to a well-furnished bed-chamber, where I found my things. I had come alone, leaving my valet behind at San Remo.

I sat down as I was. I could eat nothing. Utterly ashamed of myself, I tried more than one tempting, well-served dish. But it was useless; my nerves were clearly unstrung. I drank a bottle of champagne, glass quickly after glass, and turned into bed. I was very nervous.

I must have slept some time, for when I woke and looked at my watch it was twelve o'clock. The candle was still burning; there was absolute silence. But my imagination was unstabled and running riot in the open. The place was hateful to me; the contact even of the warm bed chilled my heart. I hurried on my things and opened the window. I was on the ground-floor, looking on to a clean-shorn lawn. I climbed out and walked back, through the still falling rain, to Starr. There at a small

inn I got a bed, and lay down on it, wet as I was, to sleep.

But no sleep came till early morning, when I fell into troubled dreaming slumber. I woke suddenly, sharply,—started instantaneously from sleeping to full alert waking. I was conscious that something had happened to me, that I had experienced something in my sleep. I had not a scintilla of memory what it was, but was impressed with an overwhelming desire—instant is perhaps a better word—to return to Power. I made a hasty toilet and hurried off. The sun had just risen in a cloudless grey sky. I hurried to Power's house. I saw no one on the way; but, as I entered the gates, I passed a few rough men and women hastening onwards in my direction, and when I stood in front of the house I saw a great crowd assembled. On the flat porch above the entrance stood Power, and, as I came up, his Beast joined him and stood by his side. As the Beast was seen, a great shout of execration broke from the crowd, and they all pressed forward more closely.

"Give us the Beast, Mr Power," cried a man a little better dressed than the others. "We've no call against you except for your Beast: give him us; we don't care who or what he is, if he's good or evil. But he's done us harm. The children can't sleep for dreams of him, every woman's mad, there's men mad too. Give us the Beast."

I could myself do nothing. None of them knew me. They were furious, and the calmness of Power and his Beast, who looked down as utterly uninterested in the uproar, maddened them still more. They had surrounded the house, and each moment I expected some would break in and appear above, where Power stood.

There was a sudden lessening in the wild noise, and I heard whispers of "The sister! the sister!" and looking round in the direction all eyes were now fixed, I saw Mary approaching, the crowd falling back before her.

"Am I in time, Colin?" said she. Her bosom rose and fell painfully; she had run there. I told her what I had heard and

seen, and while we spoke there was perfect silence in the crowd, and Power and his Beast stood still as before, looking quietly down.

“Good people,” said Mary at last, and as she spoke not a murmur from even one broke the stillness, “I know Mr Power, and I know he will do what I ask him. You cannot kill the poor Beast; it would be wrong and cruel. But I will make Mr Power promise he shall go, shall go soon, to-day.”

In the continuing silence she looked up at Power. Power turned to his Beast, who nodded gravely.

“I promise,” said Power.

Then the crowd turned and went away, but all as they passed Mary made rude salutations to her. They must have known her well.

Mary stood by me till all had gone, leaning on my arm. Then, with a smile as of relief, she looked up at me. But the terror, the indefinite terror of the dream, was still on me. I felt no relief from the menace of the crowd having passed.

Strongly moved, impelled as by some strangely acting outer force, I took her by the arm and hurried in at the open door. We passed through the hall. I made for the forest-room. The entrance was barred, I could not move it; but between the boughs that stopped our way we could see freely into the room. Mary stood by me. Inside were Power and his Beast. Both turned and looked at us. And the Beast, as he saw Mary, uttered a cry of rage and seized Power by the throat. I threw myself against the woody barrier; it stood firm as a rock. I pressed and pulled the rough tree-trunks till my hands were bloody, but could effect no entrance. No resistance did Power seem to make to the Beast's attack. He but kept his eyes earnestly fixed on Mary.

"By our love, pray for me!" cried he, in a loud voice. Mary fell on her knees.

I could not move my eyes from the horrid scene. But I scarcely know how Power died. I have but misty remembrance of mad rage on the Beast's part, of calm submission from the man. But his eyes were

fixed till ghastly in death on Mary kneeling motionless in prayer. At the last his lifeless body fell prone to the ground from the Beast's grasp; and, as it lay there, the Beast nodded his head at it gravely, and, in quick succession, fired three shots from a revolver at his own breast. He fell, bloodily, on Power's body. Mary knelt there some minutes after all was over. Then I lifted her gently in my arms and carried her, unconscious, away.

CHAPTER II.

THREE days after Power's death I left Starr and went to Monaco, taking the manuscript with me. Mary remained at Starr. The associations of the place did not touch her so keenly as—— Bah! I lie. She stayed because duty governed her actions, not desire for ease.

The bright sky, warm air, human companionship, and the excitement of gambling, soon restored the tone of my mind. Then I read the manuscript. I was interested in it, as throwing a clearer light on Power's life, and the nature of the experiment he had so thoroughly carried through. Nor was it uninteresting to find so strongly human a strain in the Beast's writing. Self-consciousness, which prevents most clever

self-made men from becoming gentlemen, was apparent on every page; but the vulgarity of general abuse of mankind was moderated in some measure by the writer's human pride. The chapters on *Reason* versus *Instinct*, *Physical Health*, *Competition*, *Pride*, *Distinction*, *Charity*, and *Happiness*, I but glanced through. They struck me as so crude that I have cut them out altogether, and have written the foregoing chapters, thinking that my introduction, together with the Beast's narrative, would make a fairly readable book—with the great advantages of extreme shortness, and freedom from demand of thought on the reader's part.

Only one alteration, and that an addition, have I made. The extract from Forster's 'Life of Goldsmith,' heading chapter ii. of the Second Part, referring to Goldsmith's death, has been placed there by myself. The circumstance which led me to do so was somewhat peculiar. While reading the manuscript, I had by my side the 'Life of Charlotte Brontë' by Mrs Gaskell, which I

had put away part read for the Beast's writing. As I read what the Beast said of Goldsmith—the only man, it will be noticed, referred to by name—my eye glanced off to the open book by my side, and the sentence I have placed at the head of chapter ii. struck me. It seemed so much in point to prove Goldsmith's foolishness and his want of adaptability to good society that I at once appropriated it.

Power was buried in the churchyard of a little church at Starr. His name and the time of death were written on the stone, and below—

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not Love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not Love, I am nothing.”

Mary chose these words.

Moved by strange impulse, I had the Beast's body surreptitiously placed with

Power's. Mary did not know. When I had read the manuscript I was not sorry for what I had done.

I feel pity for the poor Beast. He was at least earnest in what he wrote—and wrote truthfully. His life must have been very sad. Even the human being, on passing from youth to manhood, suffers for a time from painful disillusionment on finding the world he has been taught to regard as a field for noble strife between noble and unselfish men, is but a stinking slough of selfish, dirt-bespattered, dirt-bespattering creatures. How much more painful for the poor Beast, with power of reflection suddenly born in him, full, from reading, of belief in man's godlike greatness, to be confronted suddenly with the human beast as he is!

May he rest in peace!

THE END.

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